



4/9/2015

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FSA SUPPORT EMPLOYEES

USDAConnect – <https://connections.usda.gov/>

MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

NASE strives to:

- *promote the betterment of the Farm Service Agency through improved service to the public*
- *Improve our programs*
- *Establish a cooperative relationship at all levels of the Agency*
- *Help accomplish the mission of USDA and FSA*
- *Improve support staff effectiveness*
- *Improve morale, esprit-de-corp, and efficiency*
- *Promote self-motivation, self-education, and career enhancement*
- *Promote the social, economic, civic and personal welfare of support employees*



Wear **red** on Fridays to show support for our troops at home and abroad.

NASE Officers and committee persons recently visited the National Office at their invitation and talked with FSA management and program leaders about some of the concerns and questions that NASE members have brought before us. This was an awesome visit but I have decided it is a little like partying – the older I get the longer it takes me to recover from the “party”. There wasn’t a whole lot of time to “party” per se and I felt bad for our first timers as there wasn’t a lot of time to sight see either. We pretty much ran from place to place for three days. By the time I got up Friday morning to catch my flight home my brain had given notice that NOTHING else was going in there for a little while. Of course, it was 5 in the morning (3:00AM in Montana). My brain held fast though and would not let anything in for about 36 hours when I HAD to reactivate it.

I can say it was an information packed three days and as soon as our notes are together we will share all the information with all of you. Some of the things we did discuss and will be providing more information on are:

- Former 3-FLP Exhibit 5 – You have probably already seen the information come out about this and the new revision (exhibit 7).
- FLP delegations of authority
- Managed Print Services – We learned that the lincpass initiative and MPS are NOT really connected. It appears so because of the timing of the two initiatives but the new printers and contract with Lexmark are a totally separate issue with its own set of concerns. We were told it is not a “one size fits all” situation as they are now learning and we will be seeing more on the implementation before very long.
- HSPD12 – LincPass and AltLinc issues both with MPS and outside of MPS
- Workforce Engagement and implementation of some of the things brought out in the Employee Viewpoint Survey
- USDAConnect
- National Office agency and program priorities
- New Employee Training developments
- Upcoming enhancements to the FSFL program, along with other farm program concerns
- Changes coming in FLP loan making, servicing and program development
- Changes coming in the Program Technician and related positions

Many other topics were discussed and we will try to get you the full report by this time next week. Thank you for allowing me to serve as President for 2014-2015. Remember, that you can call or email me at any time if you would like to discuss anything.

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NASE's new website is up and running – check it out at <http://www.fsanase.org/>. There will be more updates coming so if there is something new you would like to see there, PLEASE feel free to comment.

One very positive enhancement with this website is the ability to submit resolutions through the website. Click on the Submit Resolution on the menu bar and complete the fillable blocks. When finished, Click Submit and it magically transports the information through the website heavens to its destination. Right now the website is set up to send the resolution to me at work. Please put NASE RESOLUTION in the subject line.

Use the link above or the NASE “icon” below to check out the website.



DID YOU KNOW?

On a regular basis, NASE has a representative sit in on a National Office DAFP Conference call. The intent of NASE participation is to make sure that the county level employees have the opportunity to get information from these internal Conference Calls. Some State Offices forward this information to the employees and some do not. DAFP has started posting these notes to USDAConnect and all employees are able to view the notes there.

 Communities  This Com

FSA DAFP VTC meetings

 **FSA DAFP VTC meetings**

 **Community Description**

Beginning 2015, speaker notes from bi-weekly FSA/DAFP VTC calls with State Offices will be posted here. Blog entries (speaker notes) may be revised as needed; members should adjust settings to receive daily notifications.

Because ALL FSA employees are either members or owners of this community, it will be used as a parent community with multiple sub-communities.

FSA staff may request access to any of the DAFP communities by linking here: <https://connections.usda.gov/communities/service/html/communityview?communityUid=29a44ac3-d1b6-45af-8c2d-3134d68439e1>

Contact Donna.Dickriede@wdc.usda.gov (FSA DAFP Project Management) for questions.

Tags: [farm-programs](#)

[CLICK HERE FOR A LINK TO THE SITE](#)

If you are in USDAConnect and looking for the notes. Put DAFP in the search box. The FSA DAFP VTC community should come up.

UNSUNG HERO AWARD

ONLY FIVE DAYS LEFT TO SUBMIT NOMINATIONS

Public Service Recognition Week, celebrated since 1985 the first Monday through Sunday in May, is a time set aside to better inform Americans about the broad variety of services provided by the Government. Each year the President of the United States issues a proclamation extolling the virtues of public service and thanking the many talented and dedicated employees who serve the critical needs of America.

In keeping with this spirit, the Organization of Professional Employees of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (OPEDA) partnering with the USDA has established a tradition of hosting a special celebration to honor and recognize the many and varied public service contributions of our USDA employees. Additionally, it provides another opportunity for us all to embrace our successes in furthering the Secretary's Cultural Transformation program efforts.

USDA employees (managers, supervisors, or peers) are requested to submit nominations no later than Tuesday, April 14, 2015, for individuals who have demonstrated a high level of service to the public directly related to the employee's duties. These nominations are reviewed by an independent committee established by OPEDA and USDA and final selections are made. All USDA mission areas and agencies have been active partners in this annual award program in the past, and we invite you to do the same this year.

This year's program observance will be on Tuesday May 5, 2015, on the Patio of the Whitten Building. Secretary Vilsack will be invited to be the chief guest. We also hope to have another special guest attend to speak and receive an award. Attached are the award nomination forms. Please distribute these as widely as possible within your organization so we can ensure full participation. Thank you for your continued support in helping us to recognize the valuable public service contributions made by our USDA employees.

For nomination forms and additional information – [Click here](#)

What is Workforce Engage- ment

Administrator Val Dolcini talked about Workforce Engagement during our recent visit to Washington. The quote used in the latest Report for Employees on USDA's Cultural Transformation is priceless when used in the context of what survey's are supposed to foster.

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Workforce Engagement

By Theve Gray, Farm Service Agency

"No farmer sows the seeds of their crops and then walks away for the rest of the year. A healthy harvest doesn't happen on autopilot. Farmers need to assess and monitor the crop, land, weather and other influencing factors from planting to harvest. Without attention, the crop will not flourish."

This quote from a recent Town Hall meeting is a great Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) analogy for FSA. It is important to assess and monitor the health of our people and our organization. Understanding our successes and challenges helps us foster those opportunities to continue growing into one of the best places to work.

[READ MORE](#)

RD Form 1940-20 and its place in a complete FLP application

Seems like we have had ongoing questions about the RD1940-20 and its place within the complete application process for a long time now. The most recent handbook changes brought on another round of questions about the form. After searching (and asking), here is what I have been told. Please pass this information on to our membership.

The RD1940-20 is definitely not a part of the complete application. We have been told it is only required if a Class I or Class II environmental assessment is required. It appears to me that the only references are when a Class II assessment is needed.

While 1-EQ par 4 says the Applicant need to provide necessary information as a part of a complete application to FSA for evaluation of their proposal's potential environmental impacts, the AD-1026 is the only form that is required for this purpose. Other information must be garnered out of the purpose for the loan.

The environmental expert at the National Office (Rebecca Deaton) provided the following references (you will want to read the paragraphs in whole for additional information):

- 1-EQ Par 3B: RD 1940-20 is prepared for proposed FLP actions requiring Exhibit 21. (Ex 21 is the Class II template)
- 1-EQ Par 4C: RD 1940-20 for proposed FLP actions requiring a Class II EA
- 1-EQ Par. 33B; the applicant does not complete RD 1940-20

If you are in another state and have additional questions please contact your state office program and/or environmental gurus. You can call me and I would love to chat but cannot give you any official information as to how your state may want to handle things. As we all know, things from state to state are not always the same. If they are as confused as some of us are/were, they may appreciate having this information also.

Message regarding EFT Validations

SCORE ONE FOR NASE – This has been our recommendation for the past couple of years:

From: Sachs, Sharon - RD, St. Louis, MO
Sent: Thursday, April 02, 2015 12:35 PM
Subject: Good news on EFT validations!

There may be a more official notification coming but I just wanted to share the good news....

Starting April 8th, the timeframe for automated EFT validations is being reduced from 14 days to 3 days!

For those who want to know a little more about how the process works.....

The field office user inputs routing information into the EFT system. (This could be for direct loan accounts or guaranteed loan lenders.) The Pre-Note status is set to 'Pending'.

In the nightly update the system creates the Pre-Note file to send to Treasury. (This is a file sending a \$0 payment to the account just to confirm the routing information is correct.) Once the Pre-Note file is sent, the Pre-Note Status in the EFT system changes to 'Submitted'. (This means it has been submitted to Treasury.)

Message regarding EFT Validations (Cont)

The Pre-Note process currently takes 14 days but it is changing to 3 days. After that time, if no reject notice is received from Treasury, the Pre-Note Status changes to “Assumed”. This means that routing information input on Monday will show as “Assumed” Valid on Friday unless rejection information is received from Treasury prior to that date.

The change from 14 days to 3 days should greatly reduce the number of manual EFT validations that are requested. However, if you can't wait for the automated validation process you can still send a request to the Finance Office to have the routing information manually validated. This will change the Pre-Note status to 'Valid'.

The only Pre-Note Statuses that will allow a payment to be sent via EFT are 'Valid' and 'Assumed'. If the status is anything else the payment will be sent via paper check.

NOTE: I realize that the timeframe from Monday to Friday is more than 3 days, but the jobs that update the EFT system are run during the nightly batch update. The automated validation doesn't occur each day until after the systems (GLS, DLS, PLAS, etc) are disabled for nightly processing. For example, Routing information is input on Monday (April 13th). The job runs every night and checks if it can update the status of the Pre-Note, but the conditions to update will not be met until 4/16. (4/16 – 4/13 = 3 days.) This will occur in the nightly update on 4/16, but will not be seen by the users until 4/17 (Friday).

Microsoft Home Use Program

Customer Service Notification Microsoft Home Use Program (HUP)

USDA government employees are entitled to use Microsoft Office software on their home computer as part of the Microsoft Home Use Program (HUP).

Through the Home Use Program, employees can purchase and download the following software packages for \$9.95 each.

- Office Professional Plus 2013
- Microsoft Visio Professional 2013

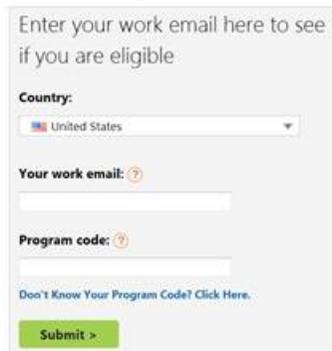
(The above applications require Windows 7/8 or Server 2008 R2/2012)

- Office for Mac 2011

To make a purchase, click on the following Link:

<http://www.microsofthup.com/hupus/home.aspx?culture=en-US>

Next, complete the form:



Enter your work email here to see if you are eligible

Country:

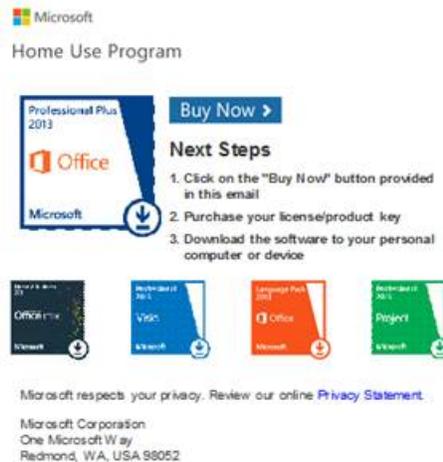
Your work email:

Program code:

[Don't Know Your Program Code? Click Here.](#)

Micro- soft Home Use Program (Cont)

The program code is not needed, simply click on the line “[Don't Know Your Program Code? Click Here](#)”. You will be prompted for your work email and you will be sent a link to the “Buy Now” screen.



Forward the message you receive from “*Microsoft HUP hup.us@digitalriver.com*”, titled “*Microsoft HUP: Shopper account information, activation required*”, to your personal email.

From your computer, log into your personal email, open the message you forwarded above and click on the “[Buy Now >](#)” link. Follow the instructions on the screen to purchase and download your software.

HUP FAQs

What is the Home Use Program?

The Home Use Program is a benefit of Software Assurance, one of Microsoft's Volume Licensing programs. It provides a simple way for government agencies to enable employees to work at home with the same Microsoft products they use at work.

Can multiple copies of the same product be purchased?

Employees can only purchase one copy of Office Professional Plus 2013 or Office for Mac 2011. A single copy of Microsoft Visio Professional 2013 may also be purchased. When a new version is released a new copy may be purchased.

Why should my organization take advantage of this benefit?

When employees use the same Microsoft Office software at home that they use at the office, it can help boost employee productivity and skills and enhance job satisfaction, helping you to maximize the return on your software investment.

What software/applications are available?

Qualified employees who are licensed at work can obtain a licensed copy of select Microsoft software:

- Office Professional Plus 2013
- Microsoft Visio Professional 2013
- Office for Mac 2011

What is the cost of the Home Use Program software?

Customers pay \$9.95 for the license and download of each product available. Physical backup media is available for an additional \$13.99 (includes shipping; not available for Language Packs). Prices may vary outside the United States.

The use and deployment of the Microsoft Software Assurance (SA) Home Use Program (HUP) benefit is subject to the terms and conditions of USDA's Microsoft Volume License

Micro- soft Home Use Program (Cont)

Agreement (MVLA), the Product Use Rights (PUR) and the applicable eligibility criteria set forth in the Microsoft Product List and the MVLS web site.

Upon separation from USDA employment, employees shall promptly uninstall all HUP software from their home system(s).

Should the USDA at some point choose to withdraw from the Microsoft Software Assurance program, all employees with HUP software shall be advised to uninstall all HUP software from their home system(s).

Employees must understand that their continued use of HUP software is based on: 1) USDA retention of SA licensing with Microsoft and 2) their continued employment with the USDA.

USDA is not responsible for providing support to the employee for installation of software purchased through the HUP.

Note: Taxes (sales/income) do not apply to HUP software, since the software remains the property of the U.S. Government.

Point of Contact:

If you have any questions on this material, please contact your local TSD staff. You can find the contact information for your support staff by double-clicking the  icon in your system tray (lower right corner on the tool bar, by the time).

Customer Service Notification Expiration Date:

This notification expires on: December 2, 2016

NASE MEMBER- SHIP

The National Association of Support Employees (NASE) is an organization that is a prime example of the hands of a few working for the majority.

There is the possibility of NASE membership topping 7,000 if every support person within FSA were to join. We could be the strongest employee association out there. Other employee associations may have cross-over interests but NASE is the only one that works solely for program enhancement and development without lobbying or trying to change the rules.

While we would like to continue to provide our newsletters to all FSA employees, membership must have some benefits and we therefore will be distributing the majority of our newsletters to our members only. They in turn may share them but remember, if you are interested in our newsletter, perhaps you are interested in our organization and what we do also. Consider joining NASE! You would then have the opportunity to participate in our conventions, receive our updates and emails about current happenings and even possibly participate on taskforces at the National level.

Information about joining can be found on our website or you can email any of the officers for additional information. Membership is only \$2.00 a pay period and can be paid by payroll deduction.

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- Inspire self-motivation, self education, and career enhancement.
- Establish a cooperative relationship with all levels of the agency.
- Strengthen morale, esprit-de-corps, and efficiency.
- Facilitate the mission of USDA and FSA.
- Cultivate support staff effectiveness.
- Boost our program delivery.

