

Farm Credit Administration Report
On the Implementation of E-Government Initiatives
September 17, 2007

1. FCA's Implementation of the E-Government Act

The Farm Credit Administration (FCA or Agency) is a Federal agency established under the Farm Credit Act of 1971, as amended (Act). The Agency regulates and examines a nationwide network of banks, associations, and related institutions chartered under the Act. The institutions of the Farm Credit System (FCS or System) furnish credit and related services to farmers, ranchers, and producers or harvesters of aquatic products, their cooperatives and farm-related businesses. System institutions do not accept deposits. Their funding is derived primarily from the sale of System-wide debt securities and from the sale of stock that each borrower is required to purchase in order to obtain a loan. Consequently, System institutions meet the unique credit needs of the agricultural community while encouraging borrower control and ownership.

FCA is committed to the President's Management Agenda (PMA) and its initiative to expand electronic government. In the Strategic Plan (Plan) for FCA for fiscal years 2004–2009, the FCA Board recognized the importance of the Agency's E-Government initiatives. Of particular importance has been our expanding initiative to use our Website to collect information from the System and to disseminate information to the System and the public. In the past year, we have expanded on this initiative in the following ways:

- We enhanced and redesigned FCA's Website to make information easier to find. The Website now includes a feature that allows the public to "Browse by Audience," which delivers a customized view of our Website depending on the users' needs (e.g., if the user is a borrower from the FCS, a manager in the FCS, or a job seeker). FCA also has improved site navigation and upgraded the Website's search capability.
- We improved processing of comment letters pertaining to proposed regulations received from the public. FCA received an unprecedented number of comment letters on a proposed rule and FCA staff needed a way to quickly process them. The old method of processing them took about 5 minutes per letter. We modified our process so we were able to process more than a thousand letters in less than a minute.
- We improved internal notification of receipt of financial information from FCS institutions. A subscription feature was added that allows FCA examiners to receive automatic notifications via e-mail whenever their selected institutions upload data through a portal on FCA's Website. This eliminates the need for examiners to continually check for uploads made by their institutions. The subscriptions have proved to be a popular, time-saving feature with examiners.
- We expanded and improved public access to information about career opportunities at FCA. We provide more information about open jobs listed on our Website. The additional information includes job announcement numbers and "Who may apply." This

allows job candidates to find useful information at a glance without opening the detailed job announcement.

A. How this initiative is transforming FCA operations.

Electronic information exchange with the System institutions has improved customer service and reduced the administrative burden of FCA examinations. It has also improved Agency efficiency and allowed examiners to focus on areas of risk. The institutions have expressed appreciation for the ease of access to FCA's information and data. Our electronic government initiatives have reduced the time it takes the System to access current procedures and reports, comment on proposed rules, and submit information for examinations. To enhance data collection, we set up a secure area on FCA's Website where selected employees of Farm Credit System institutions can convey examination-related information. This approach is an efficient method of providing FCA examiners with pre-examination information, reducing the amount of on-site examination time required, therefore reducing the cost of examinations.

B. Dialogues with interested parties to find innovative ways to use information.

The FCA maintains an ongoing dialogue with the Farm Credit System on improving business processes through the use of technology. We also invite comments from the general public. On our Website, the public can read and print public comments received on current proposed rules, notices, requests for comments, or similar items that we publish in the *Federal Register*. We provide a mechanism for users to report inaccurate information on our Website. We also include a substantial amount of information about FCA including information about job and procurement opportunities at FCA. Finally, a member of the public can submit a query directly to the Agency through "Info Line" or a FOIA request through an online form.

C. External partners who collaborate with FCA.

As stated above, the FCA maintains an ongoing dialogue with the Farm Credit System on improving business processes through the use of technology. We collect financial information (Call Report data) from the institutions through our Website and make the nonproprietary portions of Call Reports publicly available there. We partner with the institutions on using Virtual Private Network technology and encrypted e-mail to securely exchange information. We publish our examination manual, summaries of selected legal opinions, informational memorandum to FCS institutions, and our regulations on the site. Internally, we are leveraging technological changes to the regulatory and examination processes.

D. Performance tracking.

The Strategic Plan for FCA includes several performance measures related to E-government. FCA measures itself regularly against these performance measures and reports on its progress annually in the "Performance and Accountability Report." These measures include the availability of information technology resources and information to users.

E. Cost savings and cost avoidance.

The FCA is a very small Agency with an overall budget of approximately \$42 million. Our E-Government initiatives have not involved large expenditures on new investments nor the elimination of previous investments.

F. Availability of Government information and services for those without access to the Internet and for those with disabilities.

Although the FCA is proactive in its use of the Internet to disseminate information, we have been careful not to diminish services to those with disabilities or without access to the Internet. The FCA still distributes paper copies of its information to System institutions or members of the public preferring that method of delivery. We allow the public to request information or send comments by telephone, regular mail, fax, or e-mail. We ensure that our electronic information and technology are accessible to people with disabilities in compliance with Section 508 of the Workforce Reinvestment Act. The FCA strives to use technology to improve and increase communication and services, not to limit them.

G. Capital planning and investment control procedures.

As part of our overall information resources management program, we maintain a strong capital planning and investment control process. Our IRM Operations Committee (IRMOC), composed of managers from each Office who are knowledgeable about Agency operations, reviews all proposed investments and makes recommendations to senior management concerning their approval. The IRMOC review process considers cost, risk, anticipated return, and alignment with and impact on FCA's enterprise architecture.

2. Agency Information Management Activities

A. The Agency Information Resources Management Strategic Plan is located on our Website at:

www.fca.gov/FCA-Web/fca%20new%20site/Download/IRM_Plan_FY2007-2012.pdf

B. The process for determining, prioritizing and scheduling information on our public website. (Final determinations, priorities and schedules/Information catalogs, directories, and inventories)

As mentioned earlier, the FCA primarily serves a narrow segment of the public (i.e., the System institutions that we examine and regulate). The FCA posts all nonprivileged documents on the Agency's Website as soon as the information is made publicly available. This includes all public publications and reports, Board meeting notices, news releases, nonproprietary Call Report

information, and proposed regulations. There are no prioritization policies for publishing information on our Website because we make all public information available and do not produce large quantities of public information that would require prioritization. FCA does provide a schedule of when we post information on our Website. It is available at:

www.fca.gov/home/schedule_posting.html

FCA does not produce large quantities of information that would require the need of catalogs, directories or inventories to access it. We do provide a search engine on our Website that displays search results in order of relevancy to the search criteria. FCA has a consolidated list of its publications, which can be accessed through the following webpage:

www.fca.gov/reports/index.html

C. FOIA Information. Information regarding the Agency FOIA program can be found at:

www.fca.gov/home/freedom_info.html

D. Federal R&D activities. FCA does not fund R&D activities; therefore, we do not have a web link to this information.

E. Inventory of formal agency agreements with external entities.

FCA does not have any formal agreements with external entities related to access and dissemination of our information to the public. FCA does follow recommended practices for linking to USA.gov and USAJobs.gov.

F. Records Retention Schedules.

FCA has records retention schedules in place for all of its records, including its electronic records. The FCA retains its records schedules on an internal database. The National Archives also maintains copies of the FCA's approved schedules.