United States Department of Agriculture

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NEW MEXICO BULLETIN NO. 130-13-01

SUBJECT: AGN - CREATING DUPLICATE RECORDS IN SCIMS

TO: All Employees

Purpose. To advise all employees.

Expiration Date. September 30, 2013

There have been several problems recently with duplicate customer records being created in the Service Center Information Management Systems (SCIMS). This application is administered by the Farm Services Agency (FSA).

Multiple problems arise when duplicate records are created. While mistakes can and do happen, I want to remind everyone of what is required.

1. When working with a new customer, field staff must adequately check that a record does not already exist for a particular customer or business. Search by a, b and c below:
   a. Whole tax identification (ID) number
      i. Use a Social Security Number (SSN) for an individual or an Employer Identification Number (EIN) for a business
      ii. Use a national search when searching by tax ID number
      iii. Always search using an entire SSN or EIN, otherwise a national search will bring back too many returns
   b. First and last names
   c. Active and inactive records
      i. Note: box must be checked first

2. If, after a search, it is determined that a new SCIMS record is needed, remember:
   a. It's easy to transpose a few numbers in a SSN or EIN
   b. You may not even realize you've made a mistake, pull-down menus in particular can be tricky. New Mexico is listed between New Jersey and New York, and we have had erroneous records created for both states.
   c. Be careful and enter information correctly
   d. Staff ***must not*** create a second record if a mistake has been made that SCIMS will not allow to be edited once the first record has been generated.

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The reason for this is that problems arise when two records are created for an individual or business/trust. There is no way to delete duplicate records in SCIMS; certain data can be edited or deleted but not entire duplicate records. Consequently, it is not as simple as creating a new record if there is a mistake and then deleting the first. Note that FSA field staff have been recently reminded of this restriction as well.

Instead, the two records must be merged and FSA must first do research before merging to ensure that the records are handled properly. Otherwise prior payments are affected along with farm records, acreage certifications, etc. Also note that only one person in the State with FSA (Brandon Terrazas, Albuquerque) has the authority to merge records. A fix can take a few days given the research involved and that problems are addressed on a first-come, first-served basis. This can also delay payments.

Please direct any questions to Maureen Murphy, Resource Conservationist, at (505) 761-4418 or Maureen.Murphy@nm.usda.gov.

Clifford E. Sánchez, ACTING

J. XAVIER MONTOYA
State Conservationist