



10-Minute Supervisor Trainings

Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission

MARCH 2010

Section 1619 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008
(Farm Bill)

The 2008 Farm Bill included a section regarding the protection of private information by federal employees and conservation cooperators. Conservation district supervisors and employees must follow the guidelines for information security.

How does this effect Conservation Districts?

NRCS gathers information from agricultural producers in order to provide technical and financial assistance to those producers. While the NRCS employees may provide that information to other persons or federal, state, local, or tribal agencies working in cooperation to provide services with respect to agricultural operations, agricultural land, or farming or conservation practices, that information must be strictly protected.

Information which supervisors may see includes, but is not limited to:

- Social Security Numbers
- Tax Identification Numbers
- Personal Financial Information
- Phone Numbers
- E-mail addresses

It is your responsibility as district supervisors and employees to safeguard this information!

How is Kentucky dealing with this?

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was recently signed by the Kentucky Division of Forestry, Kentucky Division of Conservation, Soil and Water Conservation Commission, Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. This MOU allows for the sharing of protected information among these parties. As an offshoot of that MOU, a certification form has been created for conservation districts to sign. Upon signing this form, district supervisors and employees will become personally responsible for the protected information that the district has access to as a result of federal programs.





No conservation district supervisor or employee may disclose information provided by an agricultural producer or owner of agricultural land concerning the agricultural operation, farming or conservation practices, or the land itself, in order to participate in USDA programs. Geospatial information (maps, GIS layers, etc.) about the agricultural land or operations may not be disclosed either.

The only exceptions to this rule are:

- Sharing information with another agency who has signed a cooperator certification agreement.
- Disclosing statistical/aggregate information that doesn't name any individual owner, operator, producer, or data gathering site.
- Disclosure of specific information with written consent by the owner, operator, or producer.

Penalties for violation:

- If someone knowingly releases information that was protected under Section 1619, this would be considered a violation of the Privacy Act. The person could be charged with a misdemeanor and/or be fined up to \$5,000 per instance.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does your district safe guard information such as social security numbers, tax id numbers, personal financial information, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses?
2. List some situations where the district could release information.
3. Discuss who is effected by Section 1619 and why. Is it just the district or are there others involved?