



Kentucky  
Department for Surface Mining  
Reclamation and Enforcement

# Reclamation Advisory Memorandum

From: R. F. Knarr, Commissioner

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "R. F. Knarr", written over the printed name.

Date: December 1, 1986

Subject: Prime Farmland Soils Mapping

## RAM# 86

As required by 405 KAR 8:030/8:040, Section 21, and 8:050, Section 3, all proposed permit areas must be investigated to determine if lands classified as prime farmlands exist within the area. Historically, applicants as well as the Department have relied exclusively on soil maps published by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service (S.C.S.) to make this determination. The S.C.S. has recently expressed concern over the too detailed use of their maps in identifying relatively small areas of prime farmland. Since these maps were prepared on a broad scale which may not be sufficient to identify exact boundaries of prime farmland acreage, another option is now available to applicants to meet these regulatory requirements.

If an applicant believes the published S.C.S. maps are not accurate relative to a specific permit area, he or she may have a soil scientist, certified by the American Registry of Certified Professionals in Agronomy, Crops and Soils (ARCPACS) as a Professional Soil Scientist or Professional Soil Classifier, prepare a soils map of the proposed permit to identify the location of prime farmland soils. Such maps must be prepared in accordance with the standards outlined in 405 KAR 8:050, Section 3(2)(a), and be comparable in quality to those published by S.C.S. The ARCPACS certification is a requirement of S.C.S.

The applicant must submit the results of the soil survey as a part of the permit application along with one additional copy under a separate cover. This separate copy, which must also include the S.C.S. soil map and the prime farmland restoration plan when applicable, will be forwarded by the Division of Permits to the S.C.S. for their review and comment.

Acceptance of the applicant prepared soil survey is dependent on the S.C.S. review and comments. If deficiencies are identified by that agency the applicant will be informed of such through a standard technical withdrawal letter from the Division of Permits. Once the S.C.S. concurs with the report, the Department will accept the map in lieu of the standard S.C.S. map.

The S.C.S. will continue to conduct field surveys for areas which have not been mapped, but will no longer calculate the acreage of prime farmland. Also, they will generally no longer provide field verification of soil mapping or prime farmland determinations for areas which have already been mapped.

If you have any questions on the above information, please contact Ken Myers at (502) 564-2320.