

# Farm Service Agency

## Electronic Distribution of Disbursement Data

The Electronic Distribution of Disbursement Data (ED3) system provides a method for three USDA/FSA systems, currently supported by the Financial Operations Division (FOD), to electronically transmit and collect information via the World Wide Web. Disbursement data from the Processed Commodities Inventory Management System (PCIMS), Grain Inventory Management System (GIMS), and Centralized Disbursements System (CDS) is consolidated and made available on the Web immediately after payments are transmitted and certified. Prior to the ED3 system, there was a time delay for Automated Clearinghouse (ACH) payees between the time they received their payments and the time they received their disbursement statements. This was due to the ACH payments being sent electronically and the disbursement statements being sent by mail. The ACH payees need to receive their disbursement statements as soon as possible after payment is made to allow them to identify their deposits, perform reconciliation activities, and distribute their money on a more timely basis.

Phase II of ED3 has added Storage Invoicing functionality. Previously, invoices were generated and mailed to the warehouse operator. The warehouse operator would review the invoice, sign the invoice certifying the information was correct and return the certification page to FOD by mail. Once received, FOD personnel would update the system indicating the invoice had been certified and release it for payment. In ED3, the warehouse operator receives an e-mail notification when the invoice is ready for review. The warehouse operator reviews the invoice and certifies the invoice by entering their password. Once certified, the invoice is automatically released for payment without FOD's intervention.

### Scope

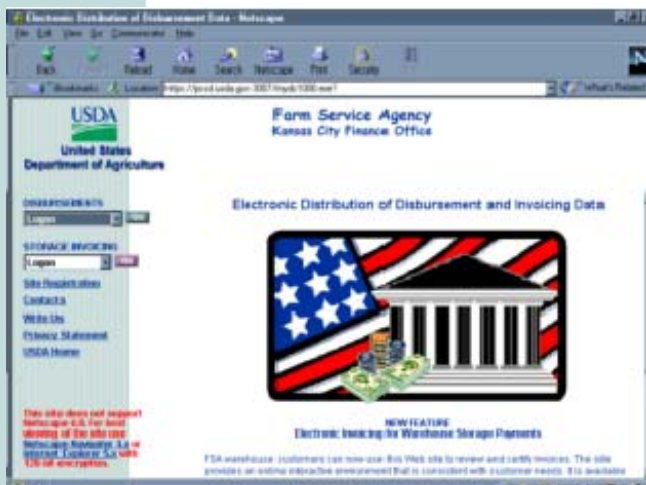
ED3 is used by PCIMS, GIMS and CDS vendors, as well as by USDA personnel. The system is designed to easily accept data from other sources as needed. By providing disbursement and storage invoice information via the Web, the ED3 system is able to:

- ▶ Aid the vendor to identify their deposits and perform their reconciliation activities in a more timely manner, providing \$190,700 in additional interest income.
- ▶ Allow the vendor to review and certify invoices faster.
- ▶ Reduce USDA mailing and faxing costs.

### Features

ED3 is making the USDA more customer service oriented with a resourceful approach to a common data processing problem: "How can we give our customers access to data at their convenience?" ED3 accomplishes this with a Web application that includes the following features:

- ▶ Business conglomerates have the option of registering for access to all vendors with the same Taxpayer Identification Number, as well as registering as each individual vendor, with each registration having its own password.
- ▶ The vendor is notified via e-mail when an invoice is available for review or a payment is made. This message contains a link to the Web site and serves as a reminder to the vendor that the information is available at the Web site.
- ▶ Invoicing and payment information from the three systems is available in one central location.
- ▶ Once paid, links are provided between the invoice and the related disbursement statement.
- ▶ Information is available for one year, with a "search" facility, allowing the user to locate recent data by date range or by document number.



## Business Process

The business process used in ED3 is an extension of the current business processes used in each of the legacy systems. This allowed the system to be developed more quickly and reduced job process changes for FOD personnel.

The data presented in ED3 is a consolidation of three legacy systems' IDMS data, stored on the mainframe, in a DB2 database. Payment information is first presented in a summary format outlining the total amount disbursed by payment. The user then has the option of following a link to view a detail report for a specific payment. By developing a standard report layout, the users are now presented payment information in a consistent, easy to follow format.

Storage invoicing information is also presented in a summary format with links provided to detail information. Invoice pages are provided in the same format as the invoices generated in the legacy system.

The Web site makes data available to vendors during non-standard business hours, on holidays, etc., thus improving service for those customers.

Information is available through ED3 for one year after the disbursement is made. After this, the reports are available to FOD personnel using a mainframe report archival system.

## ED3 Technologies

ED3 is hosted on Information Builders' WEB390 HTTP/HTTPS server with COBOL for MVS modules running on an IBM OS/390 mainframe. This combines the strength and security of a mainframe with the accessibility of the Internet, leverages the existing knowledge of COBOL, and allows direct access to the legacy data in IDMS and the robustness of DB2. Because of the reliability of a relational database like DB2 and the information stored on ED3, the application is designed to easily accept data from other sources as needed.

### The advantages of developing ED3 on the mainframe include:

- ▶ The mainframe is the most powerful environment for hosting a web server.
- ▶ The technical staff that developed ED3 was already familiar with the mainframe environment, including configuration management.
- ▶ ED3 runs on the same platform as the data it uses, thus allowing quicker, easier access to the data.
- ▶ The mainframe has a long history as a secure environment.

### The Web technology used with ED3:

- ▶ HTML with Cascading Style Sheets
- ▶ JavaScript version 1.2
- ▶ Secure Socket Layer (SSL) using 128-bit keys
- ▶ COBOL CGI programs using WEB390 API calls

For more information regarding the Web site, please contact the following:

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