

August 3, 2004

AGAR ADVISORY

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF PROCUREMENT AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT
AGAR ADVISORY NO. 65A

Foundation Financial Information System (FFIS) Vendor Table (VEND)

INTRODUCTION: This AGAR Advisory supplements AGAR Advisory No. 65, Foundation Financial Information System (FFIS) Vendor Table (VEND) Maintenance – Procedures for Adding New Vendors.

SUMMARY:

The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) requires that contractors be registered in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database before a contract, blanket purchase agreement, basic ordering agreement or basic agreement can be awarded. As part of the CCR registration process vendors are required to provide banking information that will be used to make payments by electronic funds transfer (EFT). Within USDA, the vendor's EFT information must be included in CCR and also in the FFIS VEND Table. Eventually the transfer of EFT information from CCR to the FFIS VEND Table will be an automated process. However, during the interim period, the transfer is semi-automated. AGAR Advisory 65 and the information included in this advisory provide information on the process currently used to populate and maintain the EFT data elements in the FFIS VEND Table.

SPECIFIC ISSUES:

1. Unless otherwise specified, the abbreviation OCFO used in this Advisory refers to the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Controller Operations Division (OCFO COD) or OCFO COD Accounting and Processing Branch (OCFO COD ACPRB), New Orleans, LA.
2. This AGAR Advisory applies to acquisitions executed pursuant to the FAR.
3. AGAR Advisory No. 65 provided OCFO's schedule for discontinuing use of Vendor Express (VEXP), a system used by the National Finance Center (NFC) to obtain vendor banking information for the purpose of making payments by EFT. Attached is a copy of NFC Bulletin VEXP 04-1, that provides additional details about the discontinuation of VEXP.

4. Attached are OCFO memoranda of May 17, 2004, Subject: Vendor Table Clean Up: Dormant Record Identification, and July 1, 2004, Subject: Vendor Table Clean Up: Duplicate Record Identification. These memoranda provide information about a major OCFO initiative to clean up the FFIS VEND file and deactivate vendors identified as dormant. The instructions in these memoranda are directed primarily to the USDA financial community and FFIS coordinators; however, the procedures and changes affect not only those functional areas, but also the procurement and vendor communities. (The attachment to OCFO COD memorandum of 7/1/04 is not included with this Advisory.)
5. AGAR Advisory No. 65, dated April 21, 2004, set out procedures on how to add new vendors to the FFIS VEND Table.
6. OCFO has provided the following supplementary guidance on how to update banking information for vendors already in the VEND Table:
 - If a vendor who is already in the FFIS VEND Table updates its banking information in CCR, OCFO will retrieve the information from CCR directly. The vendor does not need to separately provide the banking information to the agency or OCFO.
 - If a vendor who is registered in CCR provides updated banking information to the agency, the agency should advise the vendor to update their CCR information. When the vendor has updated its CCR information, the agency should forward the vendor's DUNS number to OCFO. OCFO will go to the CCR database and retrieve the banking information.
 - If the vendor is not registered in CCR, *and is not required to register in CCR*, then the agency must submit the updated banking information to OCFO. This information can be provided on-line via the FFIS Communication Table (COMT).
 - If a vendor is *not required to register* in CCR, but chooses to register, then OCFO will follow the same procedures for retrieving the updated banking information directly from CCR. The agency will not need to submit the banking information to OCFO.
7. Agency, OCFO and OPPM points of contact have been addressing questions regarding CCR, payments and FFIS. We will share information concerning some of the questions received, and answers provided by an informal list of Questions and Answers (Q&As). The first list of Q&As can be accessed on the Intranet at <http://www.hqnet.usda.gov/oppm/ccr/qanda.htm>.
8. This AGAR Advisory amends AGAR Advisory 65 to incorporate the information provided by OPPM Procurement Policy Division Memorandum to the USDA Procurement Council dated May 26, 2004.

If you have questions regarding this advisory, please contact Todd Repass, Chief, PPD via email at Todd.Repass@da.usda.gov or by phone at (202) 690-1060; or send an email to procurement.policy@da.usda.gov.

Questions regarding the attached OCFO memoranda may be directed to the OCFO COD ACPRB Table Maintenance Section at 504-426-5362.

This advisory is available at <http://www.usda.gov/procurement/policy/advisories.html>.

EXPIRATION DATE: Until Canceled.