

**§ 1955.66 Lease of real property.**

When inventory real property, except for FSA and MFH properties, cannot be sold promptly, or when custodial property is subject to lengthy liquidation proceedings, leasing may be used as a management tool when it is clearly in the best interest of the Government. Leasing will not be used as a means of deferring other actions which should be taken, such as liquidation of loans in abandonment cases or repair and sale of inventory property. Leases will provide for cancellation by the lessee or the Agency on 30-day written notice unless Special Stipulations in an individual lease for good reason provide otherwise. If extensive repairs are needed to render a custodial property suitable for occupancy, this will preclude its being leased since repairs must be limited to those essential to prevent further deterioration of the security in accordance with §1955.55(c) of this subpart. The requirements of subpart G of part 1940 of this chapter will be met for all leases.

(a) *Authority to approve lease of property*—(1) *Custodial property*. Custodial property may be leased pending foreclosure with the servicing official approving the lease on behalf of the Agency.

(2) *Inventory property*. Inventory property may be leased under the following conditions. Except for farm property proposed for a lease under the Homestead Protection Program, any property that is listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places may be leased only after the servicing official and the State Historic Preservation Officer determine that the lease will adequately ensure the property's condition and historic character.

(i) *SFH*. SFH inventory will generally not be leased; however, if unusual circumstances indicate leasing may be prudent, the county official is authorized to approve the lease.

(ii) *MFH*. MFH projects will generally not be leased, although individual living units may be leased under a management agreement. After the property is placed under a management contract, the contractor will be responsible for leasing the individual units in accordance with 7 CFR part 3560. In

cases where an acceptable management contract cannot be obtained, the District Director may execute individual leases.

(iii) *Farm property*. (A) Any property which secures an insured loan made under the CONACT and which contains a dwelling (whether located on or off the farm) that is possessed and occupied as a principal residence by a prior owner who was personally liable for a Farm Credit Programs loan must first be considered for Homestead Protection in accordance with subpart S of part 1951 of this chapter.

(B) Other than for Homestead Protection and except as provided in paragraph (c), the county official may only approve the lease of farm property to a beginning farmer or rancher who was selected through the random selection process to purchase the property but is not able to complete the purchase due to the lack of Agency funding.

(C) When the servicing official determines it is impossible to sell farm property after advertising the property for sale and negotiating with interested parties in accordance with §1955.107 of subpart C of this part, farm property may be leased, upon the approval of the Administrator, on a case-by-case basis. This authority cannot be delegated. Any lease under this paragraph shall be for 1 year only, and not subject to renewal or extension. If the servicing official determines that the prospective lessee may be interested in purchasing the property, the lease may contain an option to purchase.

(D) When a lease with an option to purchase is signed, the lessee should be advised that FSA cannot make a commitment to finance the purchase of the property.

(E) Chattel property will not normally be leased unless it is attached to the real estate as a fixture or would normally pass with the land.

(F) The property may not be used for any purpose that will contribute to excessive erosion of highly erodible land or to conversion of wetlands to produce an agricultural commodity. See Exhibit M of subpart G of part 1940 of this chapter. All prospective lessees of inventory property will be notified in

writing of the presence of highly erodible land, converted wetlands and wetland and other important resources such as threatened or endangered species. This notification will include a copy of the completed and signed Form SCS-CPA-26, "Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation Determination," which identifies whether the property contains wetland or converted wetlands or highly erodible land. The notification will also state that the lease will contain a restriction on the use of such property and that the Agency's compliance requirements for wetlands, converted wetlands, and highly erodible lands are contained in Exhibit M of subpart G of part 1940 of this chapter. Additionally, a copy of the completed and signed Form SCS-CPA-26 will be attached to the lease and the lease will contain a special stipulation as provided on the FMI to Form RD 1955-20, "Lease of Real Property," prohibiting the use of the property as specified above.

(iv) *Organization property other than MFH.* Only the State Director, with the advice of appropriate National Office staff, may approve the lease of organization property other than MFH, such as community facilities, recreation projects, and businesses. A lease of utilities may require approval by State regulatory agencies.

(b) *Selection of lessees for other than farm property.* When the property to be leased is residential, a special effort will be made to reach prospective lessees who might not otherwise apply because of existing community patterns. A lessee will be selected considering the potential as a program applicant for purchase of the property (if property is suited for program purposes) and ability to preserve the property. The leasing official may require verification of income or a credit report (to be paid for by the prospective lessee) as he or she deems necessary to assure payment ability and creditworthiness of the prospective lessee.

(c) *Selection of lessees for FSA property.* FSA inventory property may only be leased to an eligible beginning farmer or rancher who was selected to purchase the property through the random selection process in accordance with §1955.107(a)(2)(ii) of subpart C of this

part. The applicant must have been able to demonstrate a feasible farm plan and Agency funds must have been unavailable at the time of the sale. Any applicant determined not to be a beginning farmer or rancher may request that the State Executive Director conduct an expedited review in accordance with §1955.107(a)(2)(ii) of subpart C of this part.

(d) *Property securing Farm Credit Programs loans located within an Indian Reservation.* (1) State Executive Directors will contact the Bureau of Indian Affairs Agency supervisor to determine the boundaries of Indian Reservations and Indian allotments.

(2) Not later than 90 days after acquiring a property, FSA will afford the Indian tribe having jurisdiction over the Indian reservation within which the inventory property is located an opportunity to purchase the property. The purchase shall be in accordance with the priority rights as follows:

(i) To a member of the Indian tribe that has jurisdiction over the reservation within which the real property is located;

(ii) To an Indian corporate entity;

(iii) To the Indian tribe.

(3) The Indian tribe having jurisdiction over the Indian reservation may revise the order of priority and may restrict the eligibility for purchase to:

(i) Persons who are members of such Indian tribe;

(ii) Indian corporate entities that are authorized by such Indian tribe to purchase lands within the boundaries of the reservation; or

(iii) The Indian tribe itself.

(4) If any individual, Indian corporate entity, or Indian tribe covered in paragraphs (d)(1) and (d)(2) of this section wishes to purchase the property, the county official must determine the prospective purchaser has the financial resources and management skills and experience that is sufficient to assure a reasonable prospect that the terms of the purchase agreement can be fulfilled.

(5) If the real property is not purchased by any individual, Indian corporate entity or Indian tribe pursuant to paragraphs (d)(1) and (d)(2) of this section and all appeals have concluded, the State Executive Director shall

transfer the property to the Secretary of the Interior if they are agreeable. If present on the property being transferred, important resources will be protected as outlined in §§1955.137 and 1955.139 of subpart C of this part.

(6) Properties within a reservation formerly owned by entities and non-tribal members will be treated as regular inventory that is not located on an Indian Reservation and disposed of pursuant to this part.

(e) *Lease amount.* Inventory property will be leased for an amount equal to that for which similar properties in the area are being leased or rented (market rent). Inventory property will not be leased for a token amount.

(1) *Farm property.* To arrive at a market rent amount, the county official will make a survey of lease amounts of farms in the immediate area with similar soils, capabilities, and income potential. The income-producing capability of the property during the term of the lease must also be considered. This rental data will be maintained in an operational file as well as in the running records of case files for leased inventory properties. While cash rent is preferred, the lease of a farm on a crop-share basis may be approved if this is the customary method in the area. The lessee will market the crops, provide FSA with documented evidence of crop income, and pay the pro rata share of the income to FSA.

(2) *SFH property.* The lease amount will be the market rent unless the lessee is a potential program applicant, in which case the lease amount may be set at an amount approximating the monthly payment if a loan were made (reflecting payment assistance, if any) calculated on the basis of the price of the house and income of the lessee, plus  $\frac{1}{12}$  of the estimated real estate taxes, property insurance, and maintenance which would be payable by a homeowner.

(3) *Property other than farm or SFH.* Any inventory property other than a farm or single-family dwelling will generally be leased for market rent for that type property in the area. However, such property may be leased for less than market rent with prior approval of the Administrator.

(f) *Property containing wetlands or located in a floodplain or mudslide hazard area.* Inventory property located in areas identified by the Federal Insurance Administration as special flood or mudslide hazard areas will not be leased or operated under a management contract without prior written notice of the hazard to the prospective lessee or tenant. If property is leased by FSA, the servicing official will provide the notice, and if property is leased under a management contract, the contractor must provide the notice in compliance with a provision to that effect included in the contract. The notice must be in writing, signed by the servicing official or the contractor, and delivered to the prospective lessee or tenant at least one day before the lease is signed. A copy of the notice will be attached to the original and each copy of the lease. Property containing floodplains and wetlands will be leased subject to the same use restrictions as contained in §1955.137(a)(1) of subpart C of this part.

(g) *Highly erodible land.* If farm inventory property contains "highly erodible land," as determined by the NRCS, the lease must include conservation practices specified by the NRCS and approved by FSA as a condition for leasing.

(h) *Lease of FSA property with option to purchase.* A beginning farmer or rancher lessee will be given an option to purchase farm property. Terms of the option will be set forth as part of the lease as a special stipulation.

(1) The lease payments will not be applied toward the purchase price.

(2) The purchase price (option price) will be the advertised sales price as determined by an appraisal prepared in accordance with §761.7 of this title.

(3) For inventory properties leased to a beginning farmer or rancher applicant, the term of the lease shall be the earlier of:

(i) A period not to exceed 18 months from the date that the applicant was selected to purchase the inventory farm, or

(ii) The date that direct, guaranteed, credit sale or other Agency funds become available for the beginning farmer or rancher to close the sale.

(4) Indian tribes or tribal corporations which utilize the Indian Land Acquisition program will be allowed to purchase the property for its market value less the contributory value of the buildings, in accordance with subpart N of part 1823 of this chapter.

(i) *Costs.* The costs of repairs to leased property will be paid by the Government. However, the Government will not pay costs of utilities or any other costs of operation of the property by the lessee. Repairs will be obtained pursuant to subpart B of part 1924 of this chapter. Expenditures on custodial property as limited in §1955.55 (c) (2) of this subpart will be charged to the borrower's account as recoverable costs.

(j) *Security deposit.* A security deposit in at least the amount of one month's rent will be required from all lessees of SFH properties. The security deposit for farm property should be determined by considering only the improvements or facilities which might be subject to misuse or abuse during the term of the lease. For all other types of property, the leasing official may determine whether or not a security deposit will be required and the amount of the deposit.

(k) *Lease form.* Form RD 1955-20 approved by OGC will be used by the agency to lease property.

(l) *Lease income.* Lease proceeds will be applied as follows:

(1) *Custodial property.* The proceeds from a lease of custodial property will be applied to the borrower's account as an extra payment unless foreclosure proceedings require that such payments be held in suspense.

(2) *Inventory property.* The proceeds from a lease of inventory property will be applied to the lease account.

[62 FR 44397, Aug. 21, 1997, as amended at 64 FR 62568, Nov. 17, 1999; 68 FR 61332, Oct. 28, 2003; 69 FR 69106, Nov. 26, 2004]

**§§ 1955.67-1955.71 [Reserved]**

**§ 1955.72 Utilization of inventory housing by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or under a Memorandum of Understanding between the Agency and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for transitional housing for the homeless.**

(a) *FEMA.* By a Memorandum of Understanding between the Agency and

FEMA, inventory housing property not under lease or sales agreement may be made available to shelter victims in an area designated as a major disaster area by the President. See Exhibit A of this subpart (available in any FmHA or its successor agency under Public Law 103-354 office). Authority is hereby delegated to the State Director to implement this Memorandum of Understanding; and the State Director may redelegate this authority to County Supervisors or District Directors.

(b) *HHS.* By a Memorandum of Understanding between the Agency and HHS, inventory housing property not under lease or sales agreement may be made available by lease to public bodies and nonprofit organizations to provide transitional housing for the homeless. See Exhibit D of this subpart (available in any FmHA or its successor agency under Public Law 103-354 office). Authority is hereby delegated to the State Director to implement this Memorandum of Understanding; and the State Director may redelegate this authority to County Supervisors or District Directors. Copies of all executed leases and/or questions regarding this program should be referred by State Offices to the Single Family Housing Servicing and Property Management (SFH/SPM) Division in the National Office.

[54 FR 20523, May 12, 1989, as amended at 60 FR 34455, July 3, 1995]

**§§ 1955.73-1955.80 [Reserved]**

**§ 1955.81 Exception authority.**

The Administrator may, in individual cases, make an exception to any requirement or provision of this subpart, or address any omission of this subpart which is not inconsistent with the authorizing statute or other applicable law, if the Administrator determines that the Government's interest would be adversely affected or the immediate health and/or safety of tenants or the community are endangered if there is no adverse effect on the Government's interest. The Administrator will exercise this authority upon request of the State Director with the recommendation of the appropriate program Assistant Administrator or