



FarmRaise Passport

Soil & Water Conservation District Digital Readiness Checklist





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A working self-assessment for district staff who are enrolling landowners, verifying cost-share practices, reporting to the board and the state, and doing it all with the staff they already have.

Why this exists

Most districts didn't choose their current system. It was assembled. A shared drive here, a paper file there, a spreadsheet someone built in 2016 that everyone now fears touching. It mostly works until reporting season, a staff transition, or a board member asks a question nobody can answer without three days of digging.

This checklist isn't a judgment of your district. It's a way to see, in about fifteen minutes, where your program runs on solid ground and where it runs on memory, goodwill, and whoever still happens to work there.

How to use it

For each item below, score 0 (not yet), 1 (partly / inconsistently), or 2 (yes, reliably). Add up your points at the end of each section, then find your overall score on the results page.



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Landowner Enrollment	NOT YET	PARTLY	YES
Landowners can complete enrollment paperwork without a wet signature or an in-person office visit.	0	1	2
Staff can see application status (received, under review, approved) without digging through email or a filing cabinet.	0	1	2
Landowner contact and parcel information lives in one system, not scattered across spreadsheets, sticky notes, and someone's inbox.	0	1	2
A new landowner can be enrolled in a cost-share or incentive program in under 20 minutes of staff time.	0	1	2
Duplicate or outdated landowner records get caught before they cause a reporting problem.	0	1	2
Enrollment data can be pulled into a report without re-typing it into a new spreadsheet.	0	1	2

Landowner Enrollment section score: _____ / 12



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Cost-Share Practice Verification	NOT YET	PARTLY	YES
Field verification of a completed practice (cover crop, terrace, waterway, etc.) can be documented from a phone or tablet on-site.	0	1	2
Photos, GPS points, and practice specs attach directly to the practice record.	0	1	2
Staff can tell whether documentation for a given practice is complete or missing a piece, without a farm visit.	0	1	2
Verification records match to the correct cost-share contract without manual cross-checking.	0	1	2
A partially completed or failed practice gets flagged as it happens, not discovered at year-end.	0	1	2
Verification records are stored in a format the state or NRCS can accept without reformatting.	0	1	2

Cost-Share Practice Verification section score: _____ / 12



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Annual Board & State Reporting	NOT YET	PARTLY	YES
Board reports can be generated without a week of pulling numbers from separate spreadsheets.	0	1	2
State and NRCS reporting fields map directly to the data collected in the field, no manual translation step.	0	1	2
Reporting deadlines don't require staff to reconstruct the year from memory, old emails, and a shared drive.	0	1	2
Practice and enrollment totals are reconciled continuously, not scrambled together in the final week.	0	1	2
A board member's question about "how many acres enrolled this year" can be answered the same day it's asked.	0	1	2
Historical program data is retained and comparable year over year, not lost with staff turnover.	0	1	2

Annual Board & State Reporting section score: _____ / 12



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Staff Capacity	NOT YET	PARTLY	YES
A new hire could learn the district's enrollment and reporting process from a system, not solely from a departing employee's memory.	0	1	2
Staff spend less time on manual data entry and file-chasing than they do talking with landowners.	0	1	2
One person leaving wouldn't leave the district unable to verify practices or report for a season.	0	1	2
Staff can answer a landowner's status question without transferring the call three times.	0	1	2
A part-time or seasonal staff member can be onboarded to the system in a day, not a week.	0	1	2
Leadership has visibility into program status without asking staff to compile it by hand.	0	1	2

Staff Capacity section score: _____ / 12

Add up all four sections

Total score (out of 48): _____

0-12

Paper-Bound

Your district is running largely on paper, memory, and staff goodwill. It's the default state for a lot of districts with more program than headcount. But it means every reporting season and every staff transition puts the program at real risk.

13-24

Patchwork

You've got digital pieces in place, a spreadsheet here, a shared drive there, but they don't talk to each other. The gaps between systems are where documentation gets lost, verification gets missed, and reporting takes twice as long as it should.

25-36

Digitally Emerging

Most of your core workflows are connected and reasonably reliable. The remaining gaps are usually concentrated in one or two program areas worth naming specifically rather than living with by default.

37-48

Digitally Ready

Your district has real infrastructure: data flows from enrollment through verification to reporting without much manual translation. The next question isn't whether to modernize. It's how to hold this steady through the next staff transition.

Wherever your district landed, you don't have to fix it alone.

FarmRaise works with SWCDs to move landowner enrollment, cost-share verification, and board/state reporting into one connected system, without asking your district to rebuild its program from scratch.

Book a 20-minute call with our team to walk through your specific results and what a fix would actually look like for your district.

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