



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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JB Pritzker, Governor
Colleen Callahan, Director

Land Reclamation Division Operator Memorandum 2022-01

To: All Coal Mine Operators/Consultants

Date: April 4, 2022

From: Dan Barkley, Acting Supervisor
Land Reclamation Division

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel W. Barkley".

Re: Updated Department Policy and Procedure for Combining MYRP Fields

The Department has updated the policy and procedures for combining MYRP fields for testing, this memo supersedes Operator Memorandum No. 2021-03.

The historical practice of combining Mined Yield Reclamation Project (MYRP) fields “on-the-fly” by enumerators and operators while in the field has caused numerous issues. The main issues with “on-the-fly” combining of fields included, but were not limited to:

1. Combining fields without agency consultation
2. Combining fields of different land uses but same crops
3. Combining fields of different soil capabilities
4. Combining non-contiguous fields
5. Combining fields > 4 acres
6. Combining fields that are tested in different “pits”

Therefore, effective for all crops (corn, soybeans, wheat, and hay) during the 2022 testing year and beyond, the Department has instituted the following policies and procedures for combining MYRP fields for productivity testing:

General Policy for Combining Fields

1. Non-contiguous fields shall not be combined. “Contiguous” means physically adjacent and originally planted as one field operation, not separated by roads that have not been mined through or fields planted to other crops or vegetation (e.g. contiguous fields cannot be separated by woody

acres or separated by fields of different crops). Grassed waterways and terraces are considered “within” a field.

2. MYRP fields that are contiguous may be combined.
3. MYRP fields meeting the standards outlined in item no. 2 of different soil capabilities may be combined, if reclaimed to the higher soil capability standard (high capability and prime farmland fields may be combined if all acreage is reclaimed to prime farmland standards).
4. MYRP fields meeting the standards outlined in Item no. 2 of different land uses may be combined (pasture and cropland fields may be combined). This practice facilitates future, projected land use changes.

Procedures for Operator Initiated Requests for Combining Fields

Operators wishing to combine fields permanently, or for annual testing shall make the request as part of the February 15th or July 15th testing request submittal. The operator shall provide the MYRP numbers and acreage of each field to be combined, and ensure the fields meet the general policy as outlined above.

Procedures for Enumerator Initiated Requests for Combining Fields

The Department and the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) must be contacted via email for approval prior to combining fields. This request will be initiated and submitted by the enumerator (in consultation with the operator, if applicable). The following information must be included with the request for approval:

1. MYRP Number
2. Proximity between fields
3. Acreage of each field
4. Reason for request to combine fields

Emailed requests for approval to combine fields must be sent by the enumerator to kristi.dodson@illinois.gov, jeff.steiner@illinois.gov, janelle.mason@illinois.gov, mark.schleusener@usda.gov and john.lohse@illinois.gov. The appropriate Department staff will evaluate the request based on the submitted information and take into consideration the policy as outlined above. Please note, the Department will notify the enumerator, IDOA, NASS, and the operator (if applicable) of the final decision.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss these procedures, the Department recommends that you contact Kristi Dodson or Jeff Steiner at the Springfield office. Be aware that questions regarding this should not be directed to any NASS staff or their enumerators.

The Department reminds operators to review Operator Memorandum No. 2019-02 regarding initial establishment of small fields. Please note, requests to establish very small MYRP fields that may eventually be merged into a larger, combined field may be rejected based on the Department policy for combining fields established in this notification.