

## *News Release*

Nebraska State FSA Office

7131 A Street

[www.fsa.usda.gov/ne](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ne)

Lincoln, NE 68510-4202

Brian Wolford, State Executive Director  
402-437-5581

### **NEBRASKA FSA MODIFIES OFFICE CONSOLIDATION PLAN**

LINCOLN, NE, June 14, 2007 – Today, Brian Wolford, State Executive Director of the Nebraska USDA Farm Service Agency, released the final proposal to consolidate Nebraska FSA County Offices.

In March, the initial proposal of 12 county office consolidations was announced. Later, two additional counties were added for consideration. A total of 14 public meetings were held in each of the proposed counties. All comments received through the meetings or submitted directly to FSA were carefully reviewed for consideration by Wolford and the FSA State Committee.

“Reductions in staff ceilings over the past 16 years have resulted in almost 300 fewer permanent FSA employees in Nebraska causing us to review our FSA structure in Nebraska. We appreciated those that attended the public meetings and everyone that provided comments and suggestions for addressing our staffing challenges. This input was very helpful as we developed our final recommendations,” emphasized Wolford.

Nebraska FSA Offices submitted for consolidation on the initial proposal that remain on the final proposal are as follows:

- Banner County will be consolidated with Scotts Bluff County (Scottsbluff).
- Boyd County will be consolidated with Holt County (O’Neill).
- Deuel County will be consolidated with Garden County (Oshkosh).
- Frontier County will be consolidated with Red Willow County (McCook).
- Sherman County will be consolidated with Buffalo County (Kearney).

Three of the Nebraska FSA office combinations outlined in the initial proposal have been modified in the final proposal:

- Greeley County (Greeley) will be consolidated with Howard County (St. Paul).
- Thomas County (Thedford District) will be consolidated with Cherry County (Valentine).
- Garfield County (Burwell District) will be consolidated with Valley County (Ord).

Two counties were added to the final recommendation list after public meetings were held:

- Dakota County (Dakota City) will be consolidated with Dixon County (Ponca).
- Hitchcock County (Trenton) will be consolidated with Hayes County (Hayes Center).

The following Nebraska FSA Offices, proposed to be closed in the initial plan, have been removed from the final proposal and will remain open:

- Dixon County (Ponca)
- Dundy County (Benkelman)
- Hayes County (Hayes Center)
- Sarpy/Douglas Service Center Office (Omaha)

According to Wolford, modifying the plan from twelve to ten consolidated counties impacted 30 percent fewer producers than the original plan. The new proposal maintains more of an FSA presence in the state and maintains current staffing levels. It gives producers the choice of what office they want to be served in then FSA staff would be assigned accordingly. It would also allow FSA staff to focus more time on serving producers and less time on administrative functions.

Wolford has submitted the final proposed restructuring plan to the FSA national office. After approval, there will be a 120 day waiting period where no offices can be closed. During those 120 days, producers in affected counties will be sent a letter asking where they wish to conduct FSA business. They may choose their administrative headquarters from any contiguous county office. In addition, the current county committees will determine whether the new combined county committee will have 3 or 5 members, and establish new local administrative area boundaries for the new multi-county area.

“The goal of reviewing Nebraska counties was to identify an optimum network of FSA facilities, staffing, training and technology within existing budgetary resources and staffing ceilings,” said Wolford.

An announcement will be issued when the final proposal is approved by the FSA national office and the Secretary of Agriculture.

Additional information can be obtained at [www.fsa.usda.gov/ne](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ne).