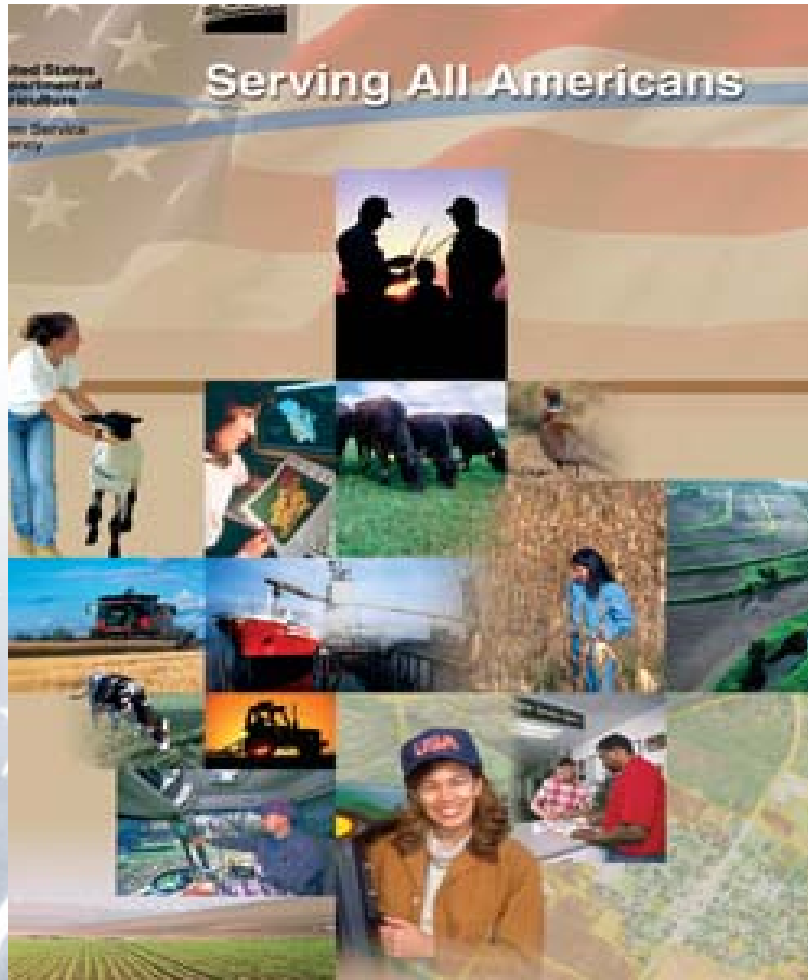




Farm Service Agency



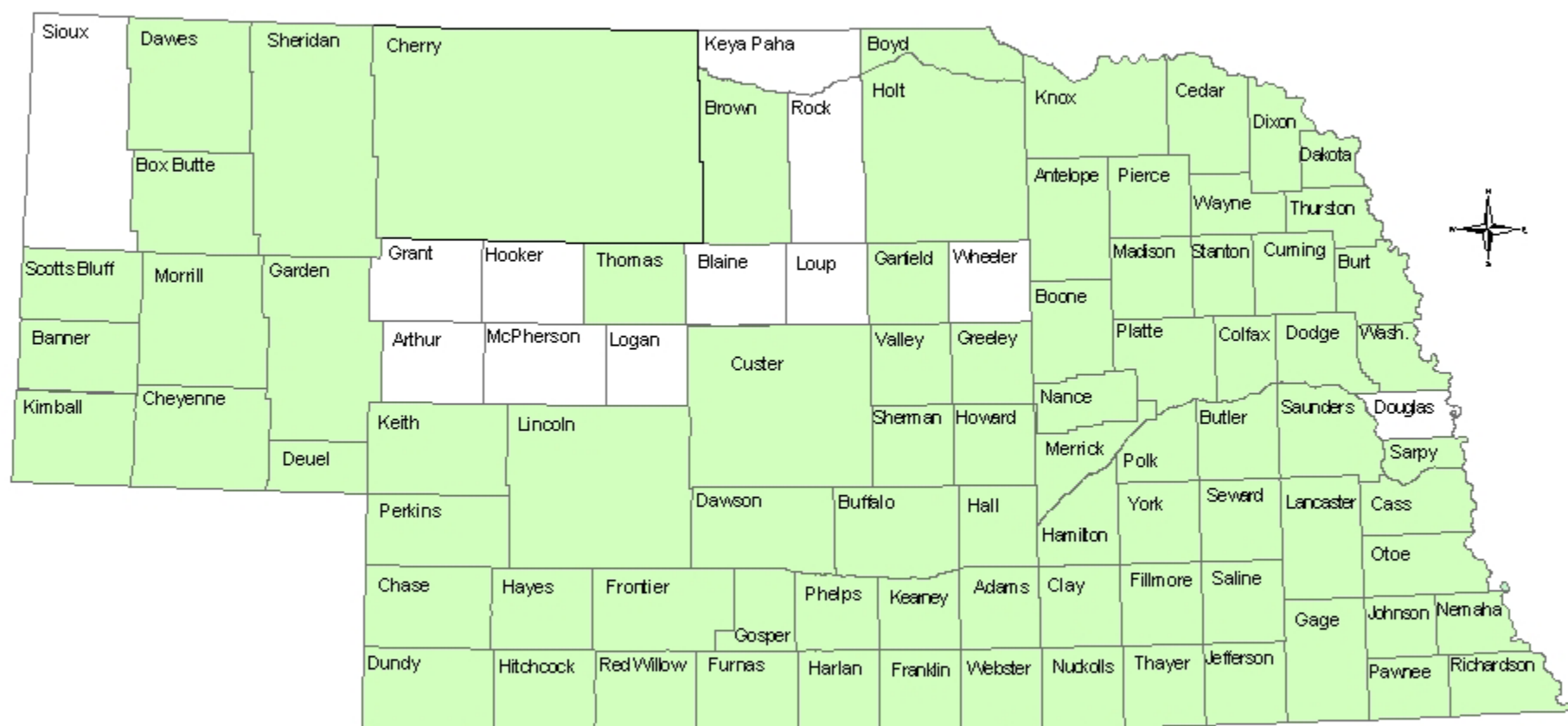
Nebraska Farm Service Agency

State Review Plan Proposal

***Our mission is serving Nebraska
producers.***

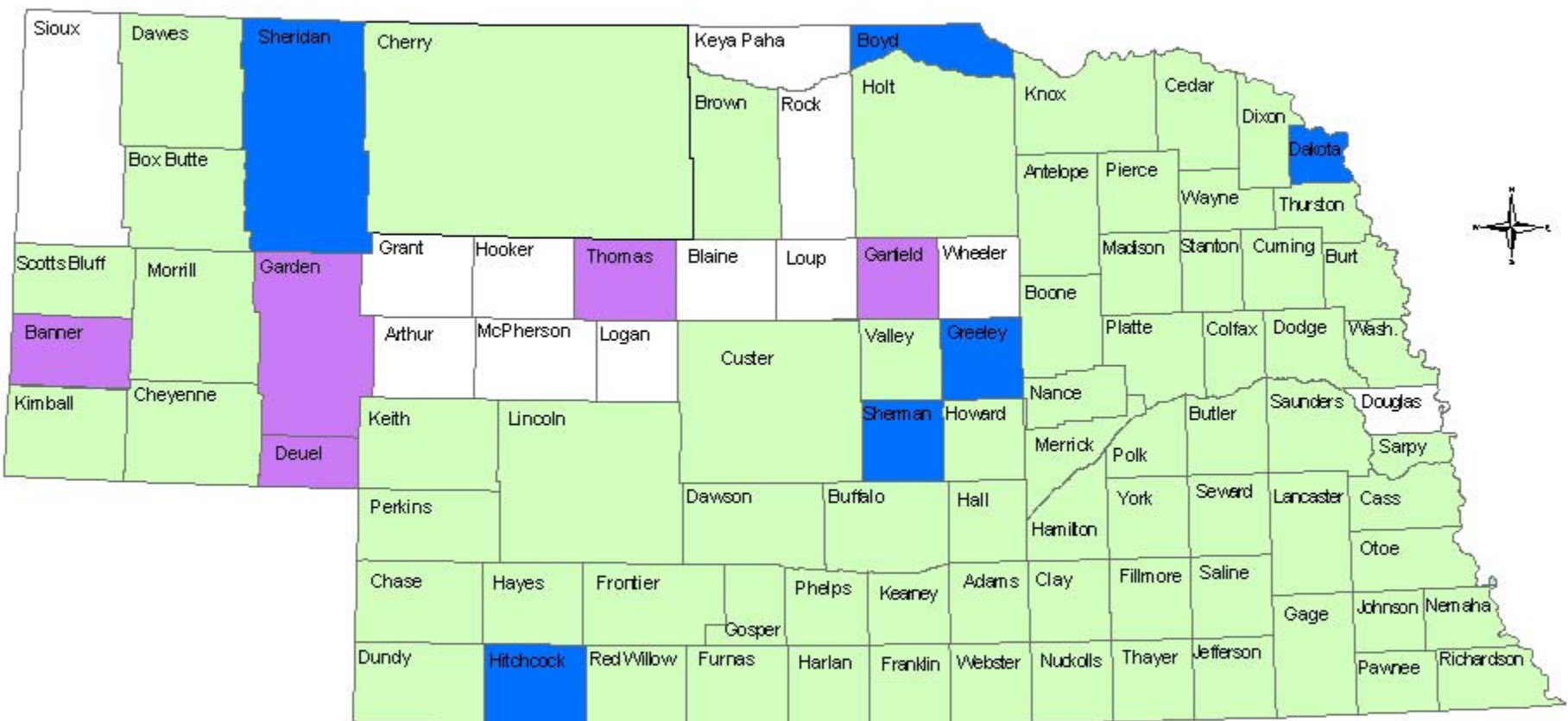
- ✓ *However, because of tighter budgets, total resources allocated to Nebraska FSA have significantly decreased in past years.*
- ✓ *As a result, we do not have resources that allow us to staff FSA offices to meet their workload demands.*

Current Nebraska County FSA Locations



- White indicates no FSA Office
- Indicates an FSA Office Located in the County

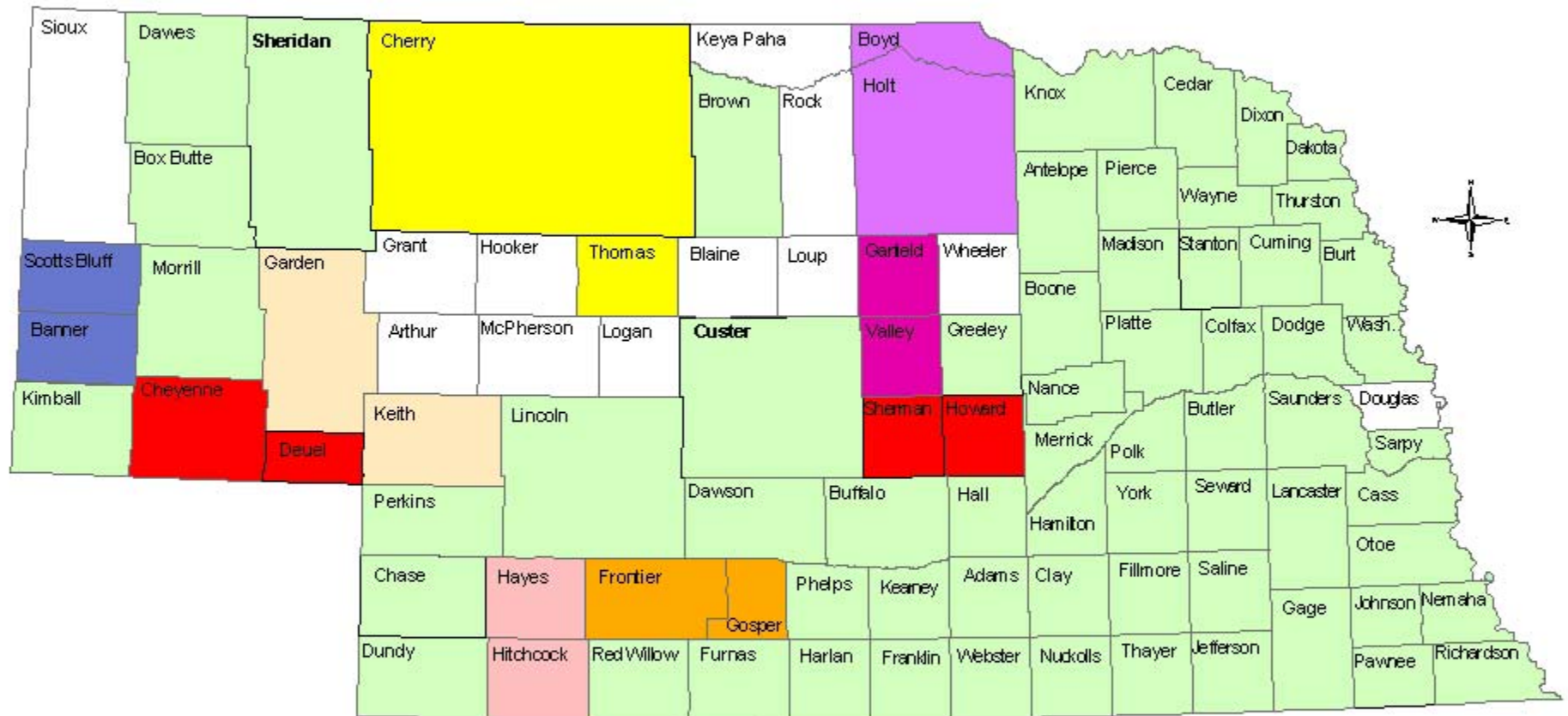
Nebraska FSA Locations with less than 3 Program Technicians



-  White indicates no FSA Office
 Indicates an FSA Office Located in the County
 Indicates an FSA Office with 1 Full Time CO PT On-Board
 Indicates an FSA Office with 2 Full Time CO PT's On-Board

January 2007

Nebraska FSA Shared Management Service Center Locations



- White indicates no FSA Office located in the county
- Indicates a FSA Office Located in the County with a full time CED On-board
- Various matched color code indicates Shared Management Operation between 2 counties

***Staffing provided to states and counties
based on measured, completed workload.***

- ✓ *Three year average workload used to
distribute staffing for county offices.*
- ✓ *Disaster program work is not included.*
- ✓ *Nebraska FY 2005 workload showed needs for
464 county office employees.*

Nationally, FSA is operating under limited resources that result in:

- ✓ ***Reductions in Permanent Staffing.***
- ✓ ***Reductions in Temporary Staffing.***
 - ✓ ***Applies to salaries for Temporary Office Employees, Field Reporters and County Committees***
- ✓ ***Reduced funding available for rent, supplies, equipment and other non-payroll items.***



Farm Service Agency

Nebraska FSA Staff levels have changed each year as follows:

Year	CO	GS	Total	Temps*
2001	417	120	537	113
2002	417	119	536	60
2003	417	119	536	74
2004	390	117	509	63
2005	383	128	511	51
2006	380	128	508	28
2007	374	124	498	28



Farm Service Agency

Nebraska FSA Staff levels reflected a sharper decrease in CO staff levels when considering the status of our ceiling levels 11 years ago as indicated:

Year	CO	GS	Total
1996	513	128	641
2007	374	124	498

As denoted, Nebraska's CO ceiling has been **decreased 139 employees** in the past 11 years.

The Administrator's Request:

- ✓ *Requires each state to conduct a review.*
- ✓ *Is a local-level approach.*
- ✓ *Has no target numbers.*
- ✓ *Has no national criteria.*
- ✓ *Has no timeline - but is required.*

Nebraska FSA Approach:

- ✓ *Develop and communicate the process.*
- ✓ *Gather input and suggestions from partners before beginning state review:*

Employees & Employee Associations

Engaged 250 Farmer elected COC members/producers

State Senators and Congressional Staff

State and Federal agencies

Commodity and Livestock organizations

- ✓ *Develop the best proposal possible to serve producers and support staff with available resources.*

Nebraska's State Review Process:

- ✓ *In person initial informational meetings were conducted with staff and County Committee members.*
- ✓ *STC and SED Informed Congressional Staff, State Senators, and Ag Partners.*
- ✓ *STC and SED conducted (5) Regional meetings with COC members and Managers.*
- ✓ *Feedback from all meetings was reviewed prior to determining a timeline for plan development.*

Nebraska's State Review Process:

All employees were encouraged to complete a survey to provide opinions regarding the following areas:

- ✓ *Factors important to consider in the location of an office.*
- ✓ *Factors necessary to improve Service to the producer.*
- ✓ *Other objectives that need to be considered.*
- ✓ *What is the optimum structure of Nebraska FSA.*

Nebraska's State Review Process:

County Committees reported that in their opinion, the most important factors to consider in the structure of offices were:

- 1. Workload will dictate office size.***
 - 2. FSA workload should indicate location of offices.***
 - 3. Location should reflect the number of producers in the area.***
 - 4. Staff size may vary based on the number of farms and producers together that are serviced in an area.***
 - 5. Larger staffs are easier to cross train in multiple programs and then able to provide better service.***
-

Nebraska's State Review Process:

County Executive Directors reported that in their opinion, the most important factors to consider in the structure of offices were:

- 1. FSA Workload conditions experienced in the office.***
 - 2. Office staff size may vary by workload.***
 - 3. Location should reflect the number of producers in the area.***
 - 4. Staff size may vary based on the number of farms and producers together that are services in an area.***
 - 5. Would allow employees in smaller offices to take leave which improves employee morale.***
-

Nebraska's State Review Process:

Farm Loan Managers reported that in their opinion, the most important factors to consider in the structure of offices were:

- 1. FSA Workload conditions experienced in the office.***
- 2. Office staff size may vary by workload.***
- 3. Staff size may vary based on the number of farms and producers together that are services in an area.***
- 4. Payments and benefits may be issued to producers faster.***
- 5. Time required to travel to offices – distance factor.***

Nebraska's State Review Process:

Support staff employees reported that in their opinion, the most important factors to consider in the structure of offices were: (93.5% employee response)

- 1. FSA Workload conditions experienced in the office.***
- 2. Office staff size may vary by workload.***
- 3. Staff size may vary based on the number of farms and producers together that are services in an area.***
- 4. Number of producers that are served by the office.***
- 5. Larger staffs are easier to cross train in multiple programs and then able to provide better service.***

Developing Nebraska's State Review Plan:

- ✓ *With limited budget and staffing resources throughout government, Nebraska FSA realizes something has to be done.*
- ✓ *The STC and SED used responses from COC members and employees to identify the optimum network of FSA facilities, staffing, training and technology for our state within existing budgetary and staff resources.*

Developing Nebraska's State Review Plan:

The STC identified four primary items that they would consider for identifying the efficiency of Nebraska FSA:

- 1. Workload of Administering FSA programs specifically that the complexity of FSA programs required that each designated location have a Full-Time CED and a minimum of three Program Technicians, resulting in the following:***
 - a) The dissolution of all shared management operations in Nebraska.***
 - b) The equivalent of a minimum of four FTE's per FSA location.***

Developing Nebraska's State Review Plan:

The STC identified four primary items: (continued)

2. When possible, the FSA Offices would be located in ag trade areas.

3. Distance between offices would remain a factor.

(The STC reserved the right to maintain an FSA location when an extensive commute exists for producers.)

4. Urban sprawl of large metropolitan areas in which the current trend in the county identifies a decrease of cropland.

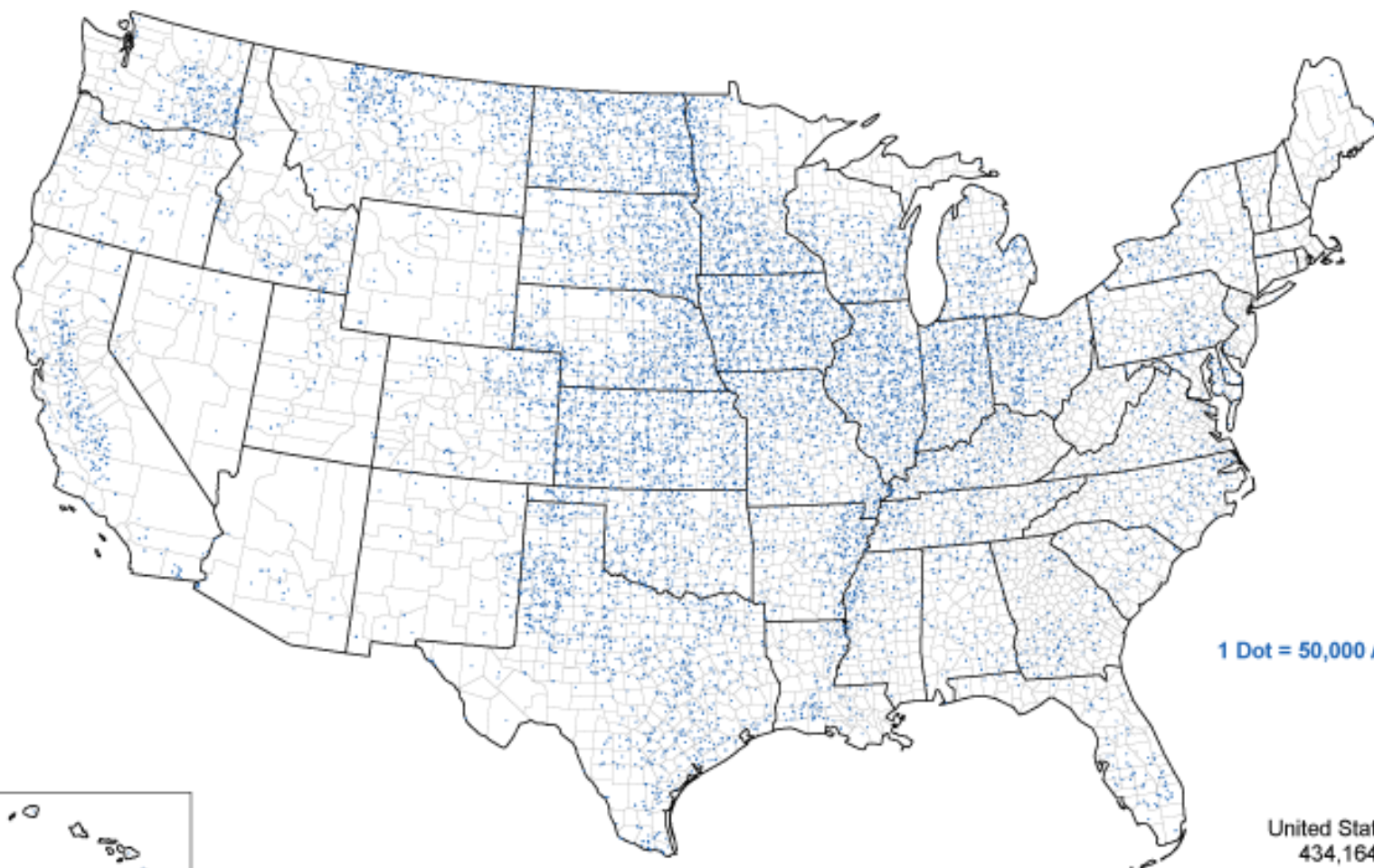
Developing Nebraska's State Review Plan:

The STC utilized FSA data as well as Nebraska Agricultural Statistics Service for a foundation in establishing data essential in the development of Nebraska's FSA structure. Data obtained from NASS included maps of:

- *Cropland*
- *Pastureland*
- *Population*

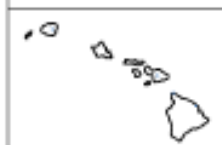


Acres of Total Cropland: 2002



1 Dot = 50,000 Acres

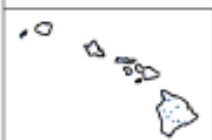
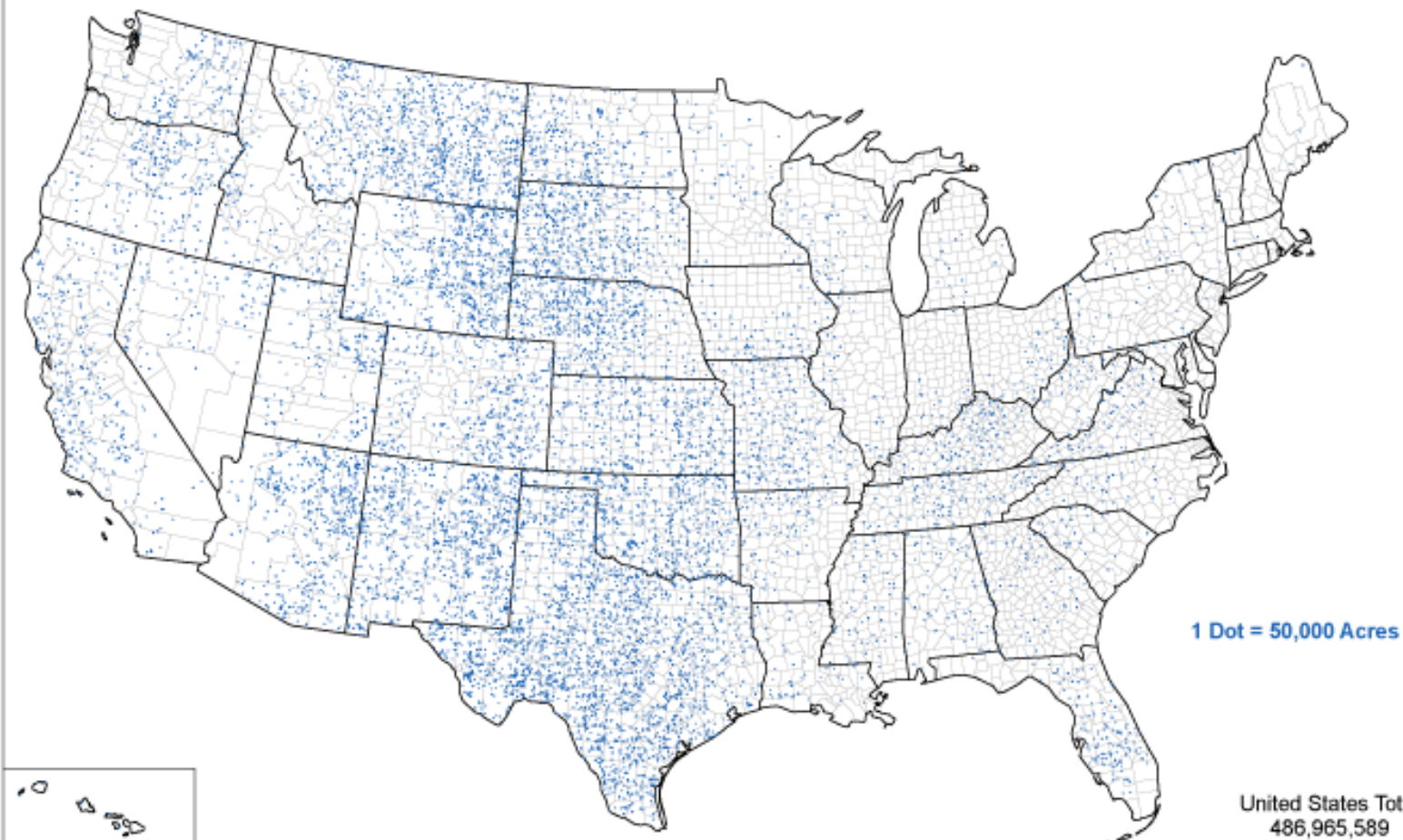
United States Total
434,164,946



02-M082
U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service

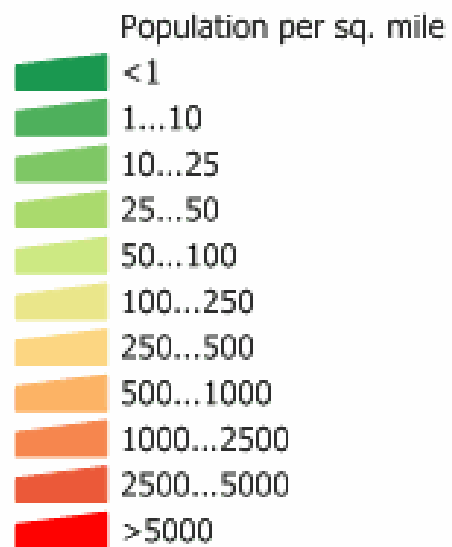
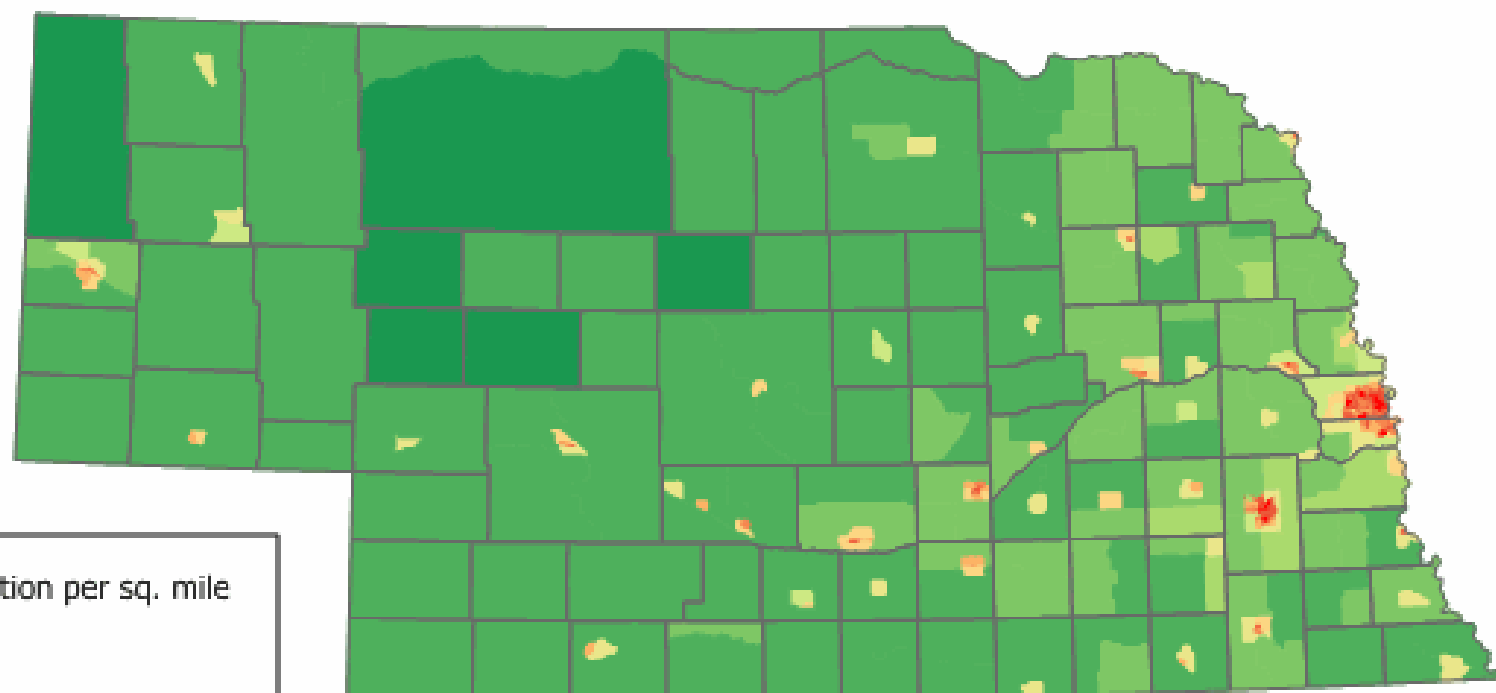


Acres of All Types of Pastureland: 2002



02-M090
U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service

United States Total
486,965,589



Source: U. S. Census Bureau
Census 2000 Summary File 1
population by census tract.

Developing Nebraska's State Review Plan:

The STC examined several possible options for consolidating FSA offices within Nebraska.

Upon extensive months of deliberation, the STC determined that the consolidation of 12 FSA Offices resulted in a structure of Nebraska FSA that ultimately resulted in a potential for increased efficiency of FSA operations.

Developing Nebraska's State Review Plan:

Reductions in federal staffing were also addressed when evaluating Nebraska FSA's proposed structure, including:

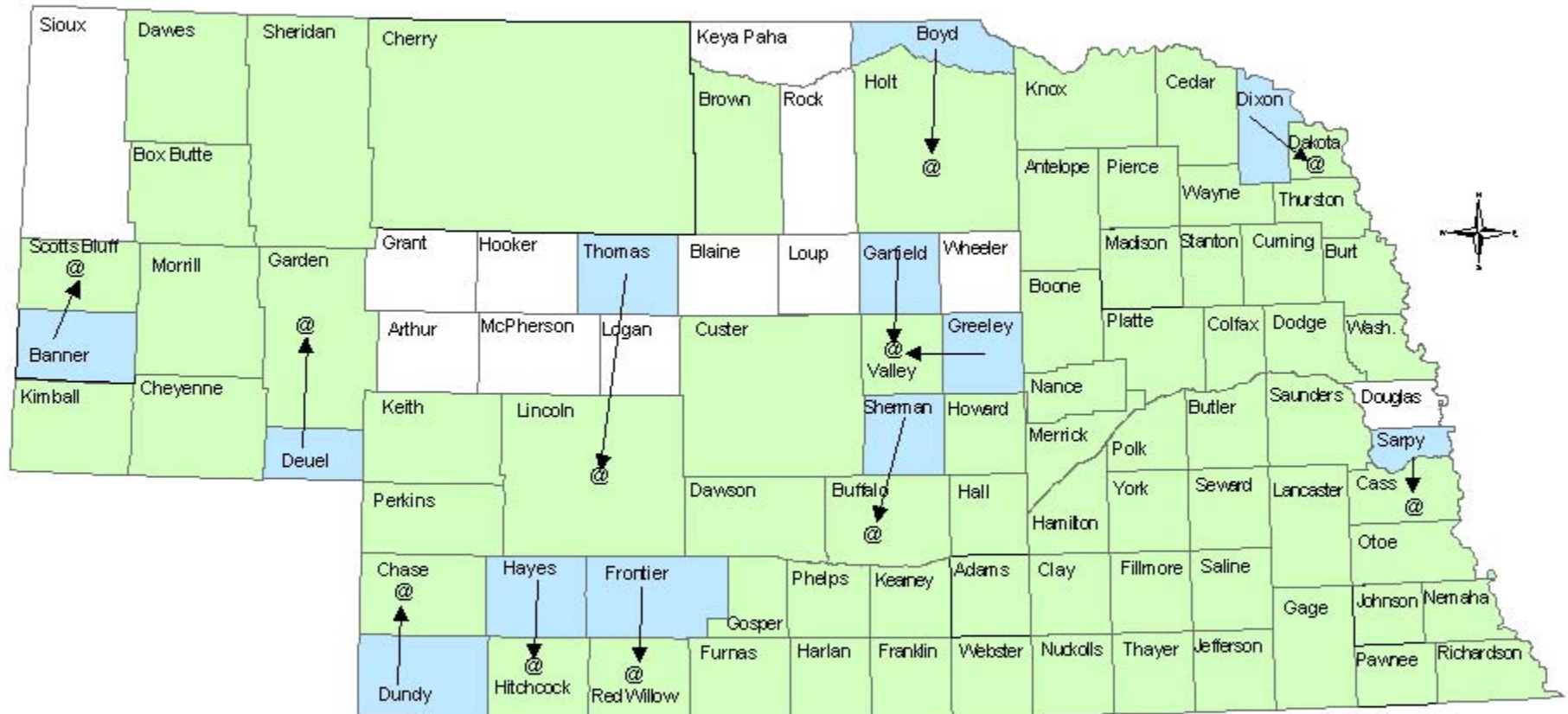
- ***Location of offices delivering Farm Loan Programs. (Identified as Type I Offices)***
- ***State Office Structure & Staffing.***

Developing Nebraska's State Review Plan:

As identified in all the surveys and all feedback that was obtained at the COC regional meetings, one common factor that all groups cited was to base office size and location based on FSA workload conditions.

The STC and SED then looked at workload as a criteria when determining consolidations necessary that would ultimately result in 4 full time CO staff per office.

Nebraska FSA Structure - State Review Plan Proposal

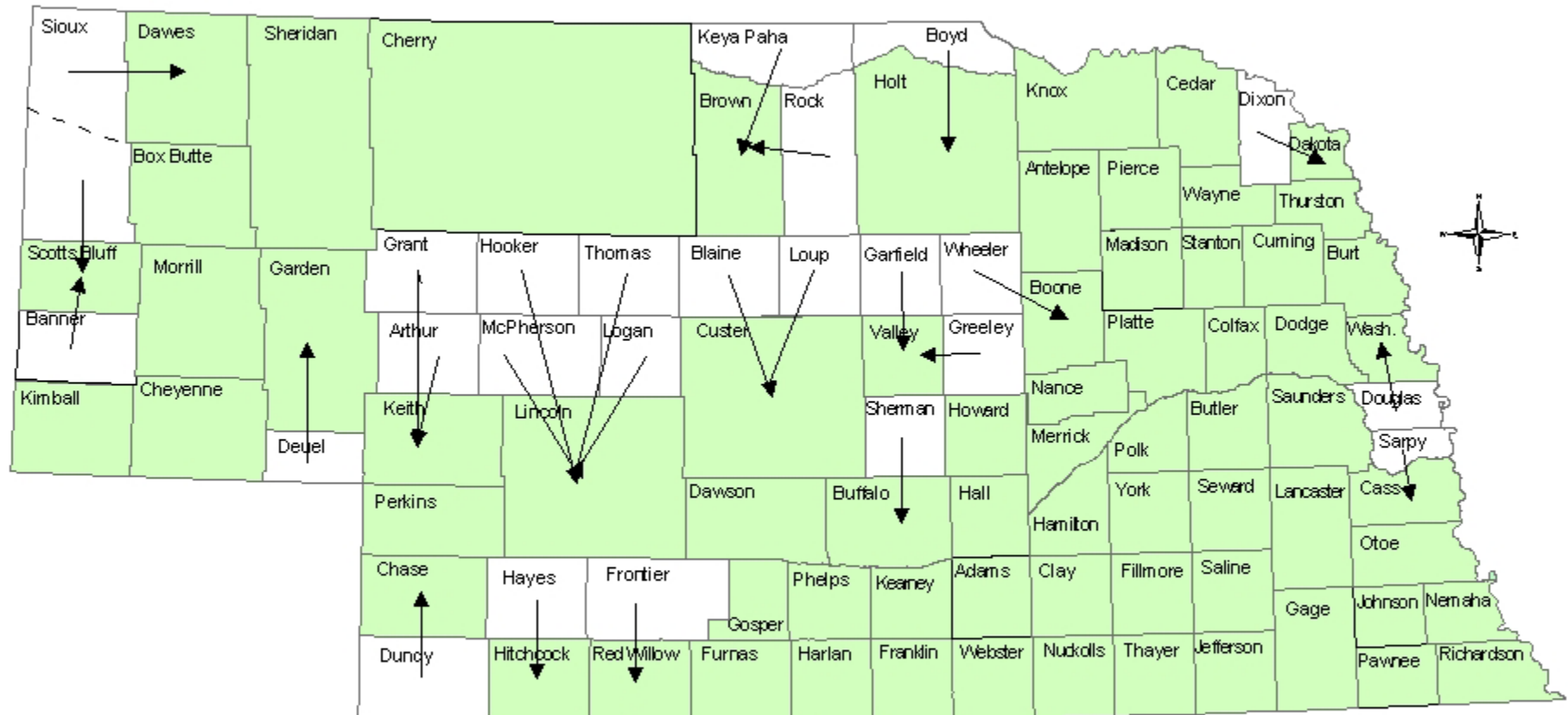


Blue Color County represents a FSA location subject to consolidation.

Corresponding arrow indicates proposed receiving consolidated location.

White County represents no FSA Office in the County.

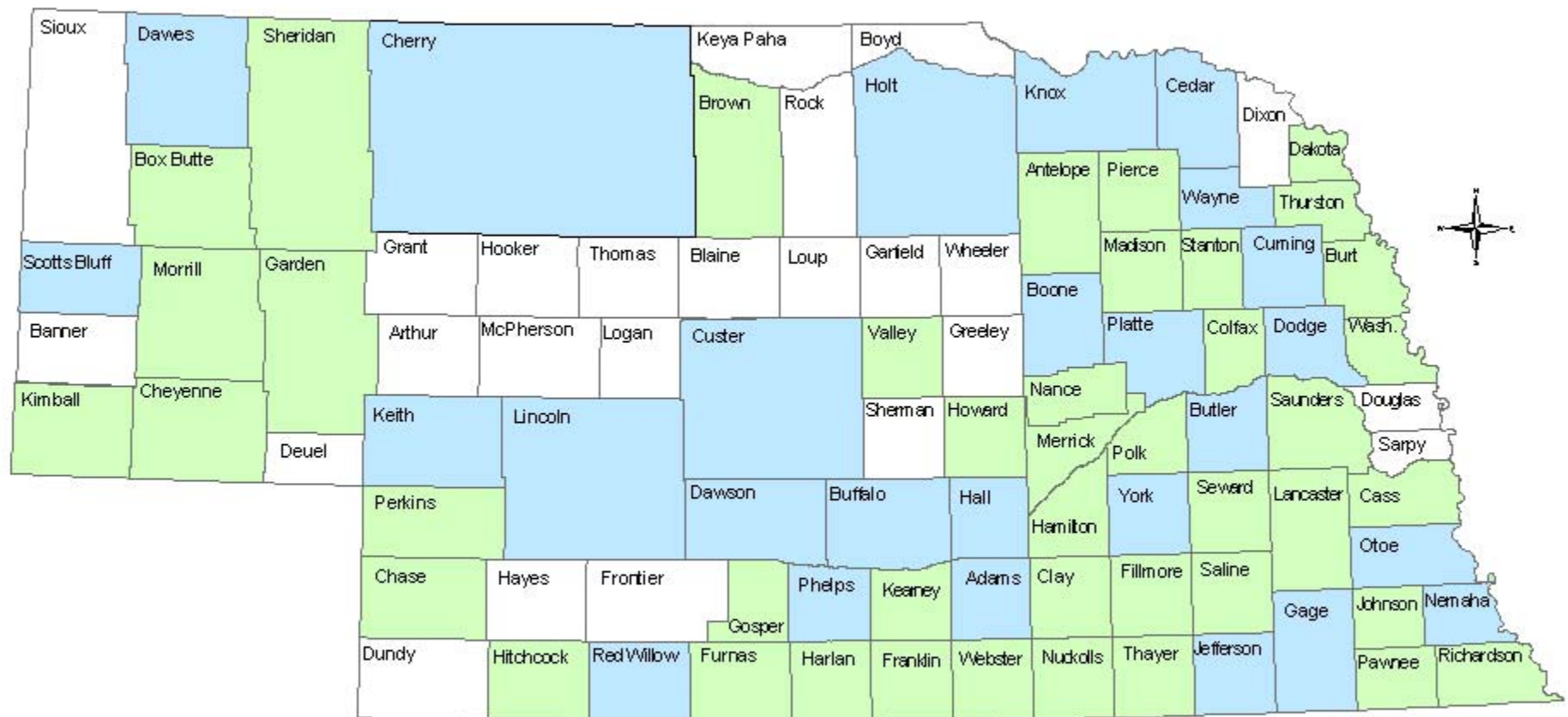
Nebraska FSA Structure - State Review Plan Proposal



Color County represents a FSA location in the County.

White County represents no FSA Office in the County.

Proposed Nebraska FSA Structure - March 2007



Type 3 Offices (NO FLP Presence) 43 offices

Type 1 Office (FLP Presence); 26 locations

March 2007

Developing Nebraska's State Review Plan:

In Summary, the proposal results in the following:

- *Focuses more staff time on serving producers by reducing administrative duties.*
- *Maintains 69 offices within reasonable driving distances and located in ag trade areas when possible.*
- *Provides a full time manager to each FSA location thereby dissolving shared management locations.*
- *All employees retained and positioned to serve producers based on producers' decisions of where they want to do business.*

Developing Nebraska's State Review Plan:

In Summary, the proposal results in the following:

- ***All locations except Cherry County will have a minimum of four full time positions. The workload associated with Cherry County and the distance between locations does not support consolidation.***
- ***Larger staffs can be cross-trained to help make program delivery more efficient.***
- ***Larger staffs will help relieve employee stress and can provide more schedule flexibility to employees.***

What happens next?

- *Public Meetings will be held in impacted communities to communicate proposal and receive input.*
- *Input will be considered and proposal is reviewed one last time for potential revisions.*
- *Final proposal is sent to FSA National Office for final approval.*
- *FSA is required to notify Congress and wait 120 days before consolidating any location.*



Farm Service Agency

Thank you for your time and interest in Nebraska FSA.

*USDA Nebraska Farm Service Agency
c/o State Review Plan
7131 A Street
Lincoln, NE 68510*

www.fsa.usda.gov/ne

FSA.Offices@ne.usda.gov