

News Release

Nebraska State FSA Office

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For Immediate Release

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SECRETARY JOHANNNS APPROVES FSA OFFICE CONSOLIDATION PLAN

LINCOLN, NEB, Aug. 14, 2007 – Today, Brian Wolford, state executive director of the Nebraska USDA Farm Service Agency, announced that USDA Secretary Mike Johanns approved the final plan to consolidate Nebraska FSA Offices.

“The 18 month process conducted to address the most serious challenges to Nebraska FSA included employees, County Committee members and producers from across Nebraska,” said Wolford. “We could not continue to properly staff 81 offices with fewer and fewer employees.”

Reductions in staff ceilings over the past 16 years resulted in almost 300 fewer permanent FSA employees in Nebraska. “We appreciated those that attended the public meetings and everyone that provided comments and suggestions for addressing our staffing challenges,” emphasized Wolford.

Affected Nebraska FSA Offices include:

- Banner County will be consolidated with Scotts Bluff County (Scottsbluff).
- Boyd County will be consolidated with Holt County (O’Neill).
- Dakota County will be consolidated with Dixon County (Ponca).
- Deuel County will be consolidated with Garden County (Oshkosh).
- Frontier County will be consolidated with Red Willow County (McCook).
- Garfield County (Burwell District – Loup, Garfield & Wheeler Counties) will be consolidated with Valley County (Ord).
- Greeley County will be consolidated with Howard County (St. Paul).
- Hitchcock County will be consolidated with Hayes County (Hayes Center).
- Sherman County will be consolidated with Buffalo County (Kearney).
- Thomas County (Thedford District – Thomas, Grant, Hooker and Blaine Counties) will be consolidated with Cherry County (Valentine).

Secretary Johanns notified Congress of the proposed consolidations on August 10, which began a 120 day waiting period before a consolidation can occur. During this period, farm owners and operators from impacted counties will receive a letter notifying them of their new administrative county and offering them the choice to select an alternative contiguous county where they would like to conduct their FSA business. Producers will have 60 days to notify their local FSA office of their selection.

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

In addition, the current county committees will determine whether the new combined county committee will have 3 or 5 members, and they will establish new local administrative area boundaries for the election of the new multi-county committees. Producers in consolidated offices will maintain county committee representation in the newly named administrative offices.

Additional information can be obtained at www.fsa.usda.gov/ne.

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