

News Release

Nebraska Farm Service Agency

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Nebraska Farm Service Agency Announces State Review Plan Proposal

LINCOLN, NE, March 27, 2007 – The USDA Nebraska Farm Service Agency has proposed a revised office structure which will address declining budgets and staff numbers and focus more resources on serving producers. The plan proposes the consolidation of twelve Nebraska FSA Offices which will allow the Agency to more adequately staff remaining offices, thus improving efficiency and service to Nebraska producers.

“The review of operations was required by the FSA Administrator with the goal of identifying the optimum network of FSA offices, staffing, training and technology within existing budget and staffing resources,” said State Executive Director Brian Wolford. “The Nebraska State Committee met with FSA County Committee members, employee associations, and a committee of FSA employees to gather input for criteria used to analyze operations in Nebraska. The Committee’s goal has been to develop a proposal that would address agency challenges, better support our staff and improve efficiency and service to producers.”

Informational meetings were held with congressional staffs, State Senators, commodity and livestock groups along with state and federal partners during the past 12 months to communicate FSA challenges, the FSA review process and to take suggestions. “Maintaining a structure of 81 offices while staffing levels continue to decline has taken its toll on Nebraska FSA,” said Milton Rogers, State FSA Committee chairman. “We agreed with the feedback from those employees that felt something needed to be done to address our most critical staffing challenges.”

County office workload was the primary criteria used to analyze and establish operations. The proposal dedicates one County Executive Director (CED) to each resulting FSA location. It also suggests a minimum of at least four full-time employees in any office which would include one CED and three program technicians. “By striving toward a minimum sized-office of at least four people and reducing administrative duties, employees will be able to focus more time on serving producers,” said Wolford.

Nebraska FSA Offices proposed for consolidation are as follows:

- Banner County to be consolidated with Scotts Bluff County.
- Boyd County to be consolidated with Holt County.

Continued

Nebraska FSA Offices proposed for consolidation continued:

- Deuel County to be consolidated with Garden County.
- Dixon County to be consolidated with Dakota County.
- Dundy County to be consolidated with Chase County.
- Frontier County to be consolidated with Red Willow County.
- Garfield County to be consolidated with Valley County.
- Greeley County to be consolidated with Valley County.
- Hayes County to be consolidated with Hitchcock County.
- Sarpy County to be consolidated with Cass County.
- Sherman County to be consolidated with Buffalo County.
- Thomas County to be consolidated with Lincoln County.

Public meetings will be held in communities where a consolidation is proposed. The meetings will include a presentation followed by an opportunity for the public to comment on the proposal. Upon completion of the 30-day comment period, the State Committee will evaluate all feedback and opinions received regarding the proposal and will submit a final recommendation to the Secretary of Agriculture for final approval.

“Once approved, impacted producers would be given the choice of which contiguous county in which to conduct their FSA business and we would position staff accordingly,” said Wolford. “We understand that some producers and employees are going to travel further to reach the FSA office; however, after months of discussions and analysis, we believe that restructuring Nebraska FSA is necessary to address our budget and staffing challenges, to provide more support for our employees and to continue to serve our customers in the most efficient manner possible.”