



National Association of FSA County Office Employees

Celebrating over 50 Years of Serving American Agriculture

1959-2012

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FSA Budget

The Farm Service Agency's (FSA) mission is to deliver federal farm programs and services to America's farmers and ranchers to support them in sustaining our Nation's vibrant agricultural economy. These programs and services FSA delivers are utilized regularly all across rural America.

Farm Service Agency delivers on our mission everyday through a network of more than 15,000 County and Federal employees at more than 2200 County Offices, 51 State Offices (including Puerto Rico), and Headquarter offices in Washington, DC, Kansas City, St. Louis, and Salt Lake City.

Our basic organizational structure of State and County Offices, established in the 1930's to provide local control over the administration of Federal agriculture programs, has served its purpose well. The local County FSA Offices in your district deliver program benefits to your constituents, in an efficient and timely manner, that are important to keeping agriculture and rural America economically viable.

On November 18, 2011 the president signed into law H.R. 2112, the Fiscal Year 2012 Agricultural Appropriations Bill providing funding to various programs with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and its related Agencies. H.R. 2112 appropriated \$1.491 billion to FSA for salaries and expenses. This amount is approximately \$50 million less than 2011 and approximately \$90 million more than 2008. Despite the increase from 2008, the USDA has already implemented a reduction in staff by 12.5% and the Secretary of Agriculture is planning on closing 131 county FSA Offices under his "Blueprint for Stronger Service" plan.

NASCOE has concerns with the "Blueprint for Stronger Service," and the following are some concerns that we feel need to be addressed:

- Lack of Stakeholder input in the "Blueprint for Stronger Service" plan
- The need for a "top/down review" of USDA's budget. This includes a serious review of potential savings from the Washington, DC, Kansas City, Salt Lake City, St. Louis, State and District offices.
- FSA is proportionally closing a significantly larger number of offices when compared to its sister agencies.
- Producers still rely heavily on the staff in these FSA offices to assist with increasingly complex programs available to farmers and ranchers.

NASCOE understands that the national deficit needs to be addressed, and that some of these county offices should be closed, but we strongly recommend that USDA take a comprehensive look at all levels of the Department, starting at the top and working its way down. NASCOE is in support of a top/down review that addresses all inefficiencies within the Department and its Agencies. This includes Washington, D.C., Kansas City, Salt Lake City, St. Louis, and state and district offices. Those county offices, with a high volume of work or that present geographic barriers to farm program participation, should not be closed.

We ask that you make contact with USDA and ask that any plan to reduce the number of county offices be put on hold until a complete top/down comprehensive review can be taken to identify possible savings. This approach will provide savings so those offices your constituents use can remain open and viable.