



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Farm
Service
Agency

Ohio State FSA Office
200 North High Street, Rm 540
Columbus, OH 43215

TO: Steven A. Connelly
Deputy Administrator of Field Operations

DATE: September 25, 2007

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John A. Stevenson".

FROM: John A. Stevenson
State Executive Director

SUBJECT: Ohio County Office Restructuring Final Plan

On July 20, 2006, the Ohio State FSA Office and the Ohio FSA State Committee released the Ohio County Office Restructuring Proposal in response to direction from FSA Administrator Teresa Lasseter's request that all State Executive Directors conduct a local-level review of the efficiency and effectiveness of FSA offices in each State.

For the group assigned this responsibility, the goal of this review was to develop an infrastructure to meet the changing needs of Ohio agriculture, while providing better staffed, better trained and better equipped offices, thereby utilizing FSA resources most efficiently. The original proposal was based upon a ranking system using eight different factors to identify in an equal and unbiased manner those County Offices which should be given the greatest consideration for closure, comparing all offices in an equal and unbiased manner.

The eight factors were: 1) average total workload; 2) shared management operations; 3) total number of farms reporting on the FSA-578; 4) total number of producers reporting crops on FSA-578; 5) distance to nearest office; 6) dollar of administrative cost per dollar of program payments issued; 7) total rent and utilities costs; and 8) percent of acres identified as cropland.

Using this information, the original proposal identified six potential consolidations:

- Carroll County FSA Office merged with Tuscarawas County FSA Office
- Erie County FSA Office merged with Huron County FSA Office
- Lorain County FSA Office merged with Medina/Cuyahoga County FSA Office
- Montgomery County FSA Office merged with Preble County FSA Office
- Perry County FSA Office merged with Muskingum/Morgan County FSA Office
- Warren County FSA Office merged with Butler/Hamilton County FSA Office.

Prior to the proposal's approval, the State Executive Director and Administrative Officer, accompanied by National Office staff, visited each of the affected Congressional Offices in accordance with the provisions of the Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2007, P.L. 110-5. The Ohio restructuring proposal was then approved by the FSA Deputy Administrator of Field Operations on August 6, 2007.

Also in compliance with provisions of the Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2007, P.L. 110-5, public meetings were held in each county in which an office was proposed for combination. To advertise these public meetings, postcards were sent to all farm owners and operators within the county, plus articles were sent to area newspapers. Individuals were advised that if unable to attend the public meeting, they could submit written comments to the State Executive Director within a week of the meeting. All public meetings were held from 1:00 pm through 3:00 pm, on the following dates, with all comments being recorded:

- August 23, 2007 in Perry County with approximately 80 attendees
- August 24, 2007 in Erie County with approximately 25 attendees
- August 27, 2007 in Carroll County with approximately 160 attendees
- August 30, 2007 in Warren County with approximately 25 attendees
- September 4, 2007 in Montgomery County with approximately 130 attendees.

Additionally, meetings were held the morning of the respective public meeting with each County Committee and the staff of those offices proposed for consolidation. The comments and concerns stated during these meetings were also recorded.

At the direction of the FSA Deputy Administrator of Field Operations, the proposed consolidation of the Lorain County Office was removed from the proposal, and the remaining five consolidations were reconsidered by the State Committee.

As a result of attending the meetings, listening to and reviewing producer input, and considering Congressional concerns, the State Committee took action on September 14, 2007 to confirm the originally planned consolidations, with the one change of combining Perry County FSA Office with the Fairfield County FSA Office rather than with the Muskingum/Morgan County FSA Office. The State Committee directs the following:

- Carroll County FSA Office merged with Tuscarawas County FSA Office
- Erie County FSA Office merged with Huron County FSA Office
- Montgomery County FSA Office merged with Preble County FSA Office
- Perry County FSA Office merged with Fairfield County FSA Office
- Warren County FSA Office merged with Butler/Hamilton County FSA Office.

The Perry County FSA Office combination change was made as a result of discussions that a large number of Perry County producers regularly travel to Lancaster, Ohio (Fairfield County) for other business and personal reasons. Additionally, since Fairfield County is currently a stand-alone office, this combination will cause two 3-member County Committees to restructure into one 5-member committee, which is much better representation than being combined with a current 5-member committee (Muskingum/Morgan). The representation of the County Committee was an important topic during the public meetings.

During the meeting process the State Committee observed that Erie and Warren Counties' producers, staff and County Committees were very favorable to the proposed combinations; however Perry, Carroll, and Montgomery Counties' producers opposed any combinations.

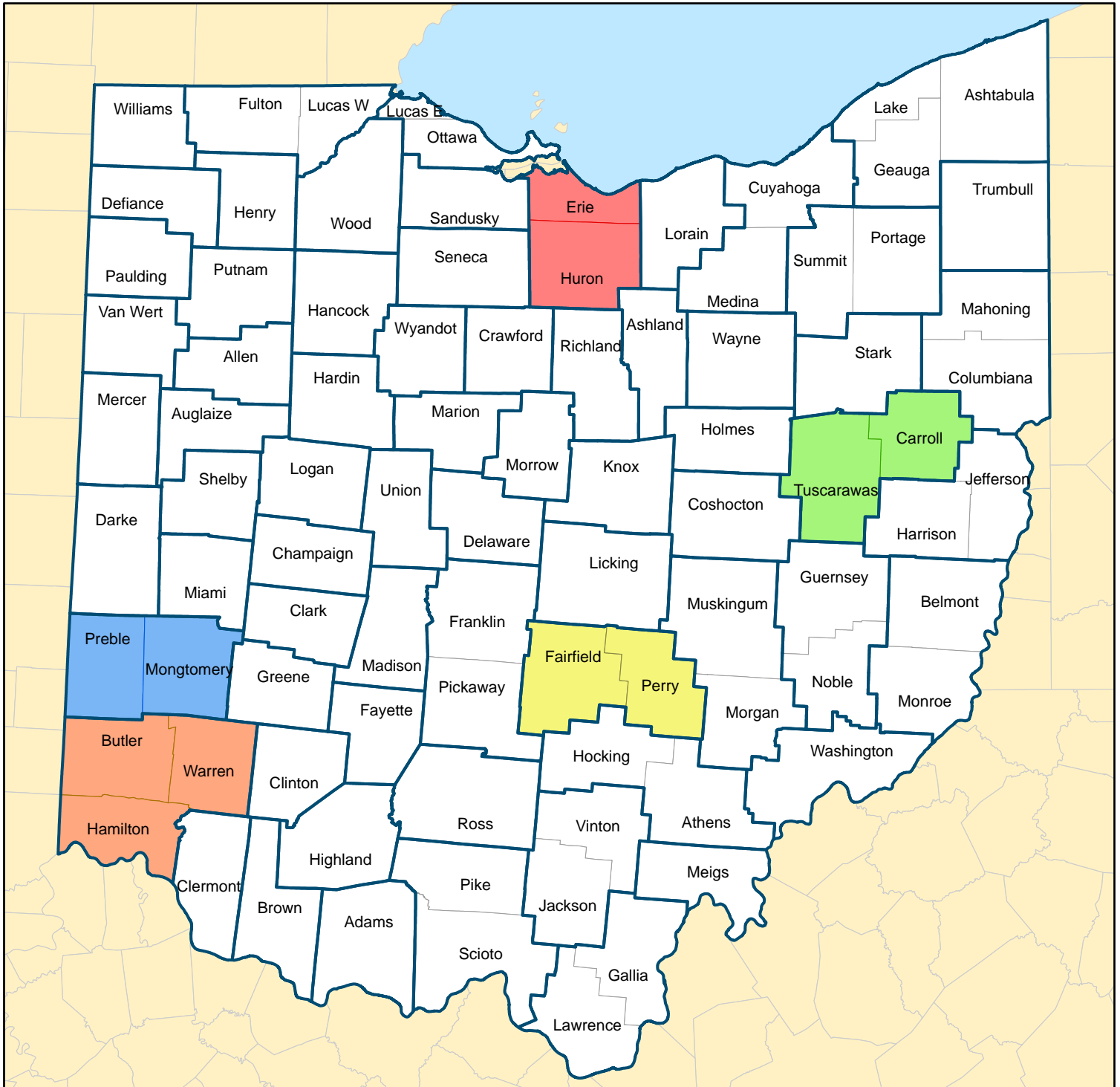
Despite these reservations, after much review and consideration the Ohio State Farm Service Agency Committee is confident the Plan will provide more efficient and comprehensive service to Ohio producers. The State Committee asks for your approval and strong support toward the institution of the Plan.



Ohio Farm Service Agency
 John A. Stevenson
 State Executive Director
 200 North High Street
 Columbus, Ohio 43215

Ohio County Office Reorganization

Final Plan



Legend

- Warren Merged with Butler-Hamilton
- Carroll Merged with Tuscarawas
- Erie Merged with Huron
- Perry Merged with Fairfield
- Montgomery Merged with Preble

Proposed Administrative Area