

News Release

Indiana Farm Service Agency
Public Affairs Branch

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ACTING SECRETARY CONNER APPROVES FSA OFFICE CONSOLIDATION PLAN

INDIANAPOLIS/IN, December 3, 2007 – Today, Ken Culp, State Executive Director of the Indiana USDA Farm Service Agency, announced that USDA Acting Secretary Chuck Conner approved the final plan to consolidate Indiana FSA Offices.

“The 18 month process conducted to address the most serious challenges to Indiana FSA included employees, County Committee members and producers from across Indiana,” said Culp. “We could not continue to properly staff 80 offices with fewer and fewer employees.” Reductions in staff ceilings over the past 16 years resulted in fewer permanent FSA employees in Indiana. We feel it is important to eliminate shared management offices, small workload offices and create a structure that will serve producers more efficiently, and try to keep the accessibility of an office within a 30 minute drive for producers.

“We appreciated those that attended the public meetings and everyone that provided comments and suggestions for addressing our staffing challenges,” emphasized Culp.

Affected Indiana FSA Offices include:

- Shelby County will be consolidated with Rush County
- Hamilton County will be consolidated with Tipton County
- Vanderburgh County will be consolidated with Posey County
- Clark County will be consolidated with Scott County
- Morgan County will be consolidated with Monroe/Owen/Brown County
- Switzerland County will be consolidated with Jefferson County
- LaGrange County will be consolidated with Elkhart County
- Steuben County will be consolidated with DeKalb County
- Pike County will be consolidated with Dubois County

Acting Secretary Conner notified Congress of the proposed consolidations on November 16, 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.

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

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.

The final proposed Indiana FSA County Office Restructuring Plan can be obtained at www.fsa.usda.gov/in.

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