



Fact Sheet:



Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Blueprint for Stronger Service is key to building a modern and efficient service organization that is closely in tune with the long-term vitality of rural America and the success of American agriculture. The plan takes a realistic view of the needs of American agriculture in a challenging budget climate, and lays out USDA's plans to modernize and accelerate service delivery while improving the customer experience through use of innovative technologies and business solutions. Ultimately, these improvements will help producers and businesses continue to drive America's economy and respond to 21st century agricultural challenges.

USDA is proud of our work and partnership with America's farmers, ranchers and rural communities. Today, American agriculture is a bright spot in the nation's economy, with record income and exports. Over three years as USDA has made record investments in rural America, unemployment in rural America has fallen faster than in other parts of the country. During that same time, USDA has also looked closely at the way it does business. A Blueprint for Stronger Service helps to preserve this success and the USDA investments that helped to make them possible in the long term.

Over the past three years, USDA's Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services (FFAS) Mission Area has worked hard to do more with less. To manage current and future budget challenges, and to ensure critical investments in rural America continue, FFAS took a variety of steps to cut costs and improve services, including:

- In 2010, negotiated a new standard agreement for the Federal Crop Insurance Program that achieved \$4 billion in net savings over 10 years;
- Cut travel, printing and supplies budgets;
- Since 2002, FFAS has reduced its staff years by 2,298;
- Moved to a paperless system of electronic recordkeeping and customer service, including applications and e-signatures that will save customers time, reduce the need for office visits by customers and reduce costs;
- Establishment of 15 common dates (reduced from 70) for farmers and ranchers to report acreage and crop data, reducing burdensome paperwork on farmers and USDA costs; and
- Proposed a new rule in 2011 to cut by 70 percent the time it takes to announce a disaster declaration, speeding help to farmers and ranchers.

A Blueprint for Stronger Service details a list of recommendations: 133 recommendations affirm processes already in place, 27 serve as initial improvements, and others are aimed at longer-term improvements. The initial improvement recommendations include the following:

- Consolidate more than 700 cell phone plans into about 10;
- Standardize civil rights training and purchases of cyber security products;
- Ensure more efficient and effective service to our employees by moving toward more centralized civil rights, human resource, procurement, and property management functions, creating millions of dollars in efficiencies without sacrificing the quality of our work.

Budget reductions, staff attrition and increased workload also necessitated a review of USDA facilities, offices and lab operations across the country. As part of the Blueprint for Stronger Service, FFAS plans:

- To consolidate 131 Farm Service Agency (FSA) county offices in 32 states. More than 2,100 FSA offices remain throughout the United States. In many cases, offices recommended for closure are either not staffed or staffed with just one or two employees and within 20 miles of other offices. See table below.

Alabama: None	Indiana: Lake County Morgan County St. Joseph County	Nebraska: None	South Carolina: Allendale County Edgefield County York County
Alaska: None	Iowa: Appanoose County Decatur County Union County	Nevada: Douglas County	South Dakota: Jerauld County Campbell County Jackson County Harding County
Arizona: Pima County	Kansas: None	New Hampshire: None	Tennessee: Anderson County Bedford County Bledsoe County Cannon County Carter County Cocke County Humphreys County Sevier County Trousdale County
Arkansas: Bradley County Fulton County Garland County Izard County Johnson County Lafayette County Logan County Benton County Pulaski County Faulkner County	Kentucky: Green County Jackson County Whitley County Bullitt County Lee County	New Jersey: None	Texas: Delta County Lee County Midland County Mills County Roberts County San Augustine County Shelby County Waller County Andrews County Cass County Hutchison County Rusk County Upshur County Val Verde County Van Zandt County
California: None	Louisiana: Bossier County Lafayette County Livingston County Grant County St. Mary County	New Mexico: Bernalillo County Santa Fe County	Utah: Washington County
Colorado: Huerfano County Boulder County Rio Grande County	Maine: Knox-Lincoln County	New York: Albany County Saratoga County Yates County Sullivan County	Vermont: None

Connecticut: None	Maryland: Calvert County	North Carolina: Catawba County Chowan County Moore County Warren County Pamlico County Hertford County	Virginia: None
Delaware: None	Massachusetts: None	North Dakota: None	Washington: None
Florida: Escambia County Hamilton County Lafayette County Levy County Washington County Highlands County	Michigan: Kalamazoo County	Ohio: Clark County Meigs County Montgomery County Perry County Carroll County	West Virginia: Mineral County Gilmer County Monongalia County Cabell County Nicholas County
Georgia: Baker County Candler County Morgan County	Minnesota: Waseca County Pine County Scott County Chisago County Nicollet County	Oklahoma: Pawnee County Mayes County	Wisconsin: Marinette County
Hawaii: None	Mississippi : Benton County Choctaw County De Soto County Itawamba County Lamar County Lawrence County Smith County Yalobusha County	Oregon: Polk County Grant County Tillamook County	Wyoming: None
Idaho: Owyhee County Payette County Lincoln County Clearwater County	Missouri: Morgan County Dallas County Jefferson / Washington County	Pennsylvania: Blair County Carbon County Fulton County Mifflin County Perry County Wyoming County Lebanon County	
Illinois: None	Montana: Treasure County	Rhode Island: None	

FFAS also plans:

- To close 2 Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) country offices (foreign posts) in Stockholm, Sweden and Damascus, Syria. More than 95 FAS offices remain throughout the world. Service in offices recommended for closure will be handled by personnel assigned to other countries in the region.

As we move forward, USDA will continue to find ways to modernize its services, improve the customer experience, and ensure a successful, sustainable future for rural America.

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