

National Farmers Union 2007 Special Order of Business

Farm Service Agency Office Closing

WHEREAS, Farm Service Agency (FSA) county offices exist to provide services to America's farm and ranch families by administering a wide range of federal farm, conservation and credit programs; and

WHEREAS, the 2007 Farm Bill will likely include additional new rural development and conservation programs that will require additional workloads for FSA county offices; and

WHEREAS, farmers and ranchers have already experienced consolidation of FSA county offices resulting in long drives, lost work-time and greater fuel expenses for both the farmer and ranchers and the FSA employees administering the programs; and

WHEREAS, many farmers and ranchers either cannot or prefer not to utilize online FSA applications. In many cases farmers and ranchers do not have affordable, dependable, high-speed internet access; and

WHEREAS, FSA county offices also provide positive economic benefits to local communities by providing good paying jobs with healthcare and retirement benefits; also serve as economic hubs for local communities by virtue of the need for county farmers and ranchers to visit those local communities which also increases local shopping and economic activity; and

WHEREAS, the bulk of FSA programs administrative inefficiencies exist in USDA headquarters in Washington, D.C., not in the local delivery system.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, National Farmers Union strongly opposes Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns' latest efforts to close and/or consolidate FSA county offices. We urge Congress to take proactive measures to prevent USDA from implementing any closure or consolidation of local FSA offices.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, NFU strongly supports increasing the funding of FSA staff to administer the wide range of federal farm, conservation and credit programs. America's farmers and ranchers utilize and depend upon and also insure the investment of taxpayer dollars in conservation programs are being properly implemented.