

10/17/2005 Moran Calls on USDA Officials to Reconsider FSA Office Closures

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - After spending time last week visiting with farmers across Kansas, Congressman Jerry Moran this week is calling on U.S. Department of Agriculture officials to reconsider their plans of closing or relocating a large number of Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices. These closures are a part of USDA's recent "FSA Tomorrow" proposal to close 30 percent of the more than 2,300 FSA local or county offices nationwide.

"Local and county FSA offices provide an important service to our farmers and ranchers," Moran said. "Any proposals to restructure this program must be carefully considered to ensure the availability and quality of service is not sacrificed."

Kansas currently has 103 county offices to serve producers in 105 counties. USDA's "FSA Tomorrow" plan would close 29 of these Kansas FSA offices. Determinations are to be made on the state level with proposals submitted to the USDA by November 15.

Moran recently joined other Members in encouraging House Appropriation Committee leaders to prohibit 2006 federal funds from being used in closing or relocating FSA offices. This allows officials to more carefully consider the FSA needs of agricultural producers.

"Until we have a better understanding of the difficulties these changes would pose for farmers and local economies, as well as the actual cost effectiveness, we should hold off on this plan," Moran said.

Moran is a senior member of the House Agriculture Committee.

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