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### **Farm Service Agency to Reorganize in Washington**

(Spokane, WA) - The Farm Service Agency in Washington state will be reviewing its office structure as part of the agency's new business plan, FSA Tomorrow according to FSA State Executive Director James F. Fitzgerald in Spokane. "Due to our current structure, Washington state will experience minimal impact compared to many states," said Fitzgerald. "It is too early to tell what our organization will look like in the state. We see this as an opportunity to review our efficiencies throughout the state. FSA Tomorrow is a good business plan and good business is good government."

The national FSA staff shared its new business plan with agency state directors last Friday. State offices were given a starting point - offices that the national office looked at for consolidation based on distances between county offices and workload in each office. States have until November 15 to review and propose changes to respective state portions of the plan. The plan will be implemented in the following nine months.

"Most of the agency still has the same office structure our predecessor agency had when it began in the 1930s with an office in each county," said Fitzgerald. "Since that time, agriculture has consolidated; transportation, communication and farm programs have changed. It is time to modernize the service that we provide."

The agency intends to increase efficiency by centralizing staff in fewer offices. "We can free up resources to re-invest in training and technology to help us better serve farmers and ranchers," he said. "This is a bold and aggressive agenda that will position our agency to accommodate the needs of the next Farm Bill."

FSA in Washington state currently has 25 offices serving farmers and ranchers in 39 counties, unlike many states which have an office in every county. "We are reviewing data and taking a comprehensive approach to organizing our delivery system in a manner that makes good business sense. We will look at topography and demographics specific to our state. We also plan to visit with county committees of potentially impacted counties before making a final recommendation to the national office," said Fitzgerald.

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