

DAVID LOEBSACK
2ND DISTRICT, IOWA

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The Honorable Jack Kingston
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1502

March 13, 2012

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The Honorable Frank D. Lucas
Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture
1300 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Kingston and Chairman Lucas,

I write to bring to your attention concerns communities in Iowa and I have with respect to the announced closing on February 27 of USDA offices in Iowa. While I, and other Iowa colleagues have worked to make the USDA aware of problems with closing the offices in Iowa, I thought it important to provide you with information on the potential impact of these closings on the agricultural community in the area I represent and ask that you include funding in the FY13 Agriculture Appropriations bill to prevent these offices from closing.

The closing of the FSA offices in Iowa do not seem to make sense based on their workload and have raised important questions that have yet to be answered about the criteria used to close them. For example, the Iowa offices only meet the criteria for closing with 2 or less employees because they have had recent retirements and there is a hiring freeze in place, in addition, it does not appear the workload and productivity of these offices even with less staff was taken into account.

The proposed closing of USDA offices in Centerville, Leon, Creston, and Fairfield, Iowa risks limiting the availability of and access to a range of services that the backbones of our rural economies, farmers, frequently use and reducing the efficiency of farm assistance and conservation programs. Many of the programs that are critical to Iowa farmers and the economic development of Iowa's rural communities are also complicated.

Closing these offices threatens to make these programs less accessible to the farmers who need them, hurting not only individual farmers but local economies as well. There are few things more important than ensuring Iowa and the U.S. remains the most productive agricultural producer in the world. As we increase our productivity, output, and exports and feed more of the world, USDA's workload will only increase from its already record highs and demand for USDA services will only increase.

I again respectfully urge your consideration of these points and urge you to include FY13 funding to keep these important Iowa FSA offices open. Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Dave Loeb sack
Iowa's Second District